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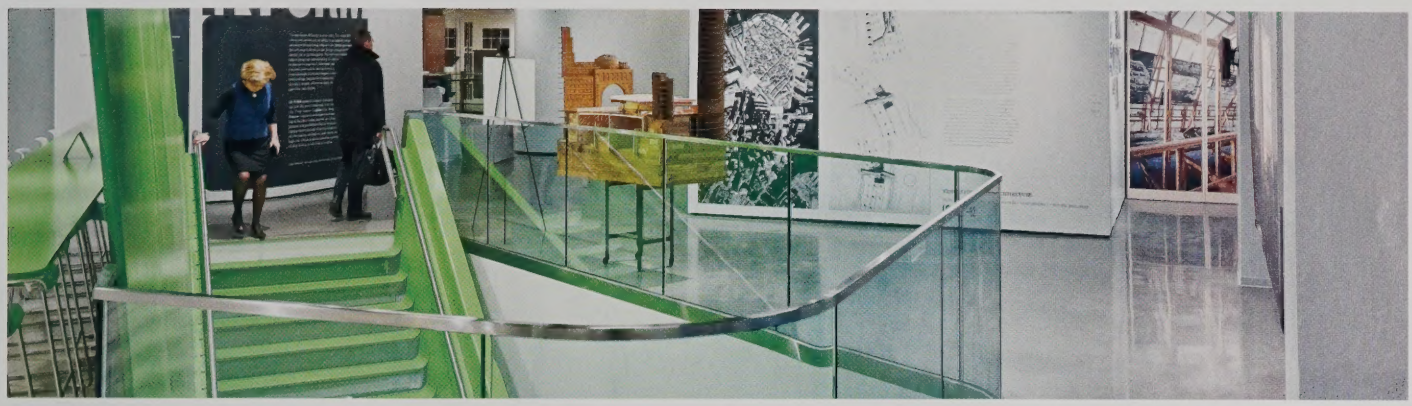
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ABOVE
Entering the gallery at the new BSA Space. Photo: Ben Gebo.

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ARCHITECT Stern McCafferty PHOTOGRAPHER Eric Roth

Choosing Change

Twenty-five years ago I made a change. After I graduated from the Harvard GSD and was seemingly destined for a job in a large New York architectural firm, a series of events came together. Against all reason, I upended my life and chose to stay in Boston. At the time, Boston was a much grittier place with an uncertain future and not the kind of leading metropolis that I yearned to live in. The Central Artery and elevated Orange Line rumbled through town, and Jordan Marsh and Filene's still anchored Downtown Crossing—all their days numbered. Still, I found the juxtaposition of old and new both unique and beautiful, and it seemed like a place where the built environment was valued for its history as well as its potential. The decision to stay was a course correction—and I'm glad I made it. Years later, it is no secret to anyone who knows me that I love Boston.

Change, much of it unsettling, is in the air. Technology and the culture that has emerged from it have connected us to the world more fully than ever before. From the rapid development of emerging markets to the unwinding global financial crisis, little is happening around the world that does not affect us here.

Although many of us seem not to realize it, over the past two decades, Boston has become a "global city." In many fields, Boston is acknowledged as an influential and innovative idea factory for a world where no one can afford to fall behind. I often wonder if we, as architects and designers, recognize—never mind embrace—this aspect of our identity. Are we nimble, innovative, and willing to change course to best promote our collective concerns for the built environment, both here and elsewhere? In short, will Boston be an *avant-garde* crucible of design innovation and thinking in the 21st century as it has been in the past? The choice is ours.

Here at home, with a re-energized mission of outreach, the Boston Society of Architects is making big plans by opening an ambitious new public space on the burgeoning waterfront—the BSA Space. Similarly, after 15 years under the stewardship of its founding editor, Elizabeth Padjen FAIA, *ArchitectureBoston* will soon welcome a new editor, Renée Loth. It is an honor to be given the opportunity to be the guest editor at this particular moment, bridging the work of these two extraordinary women.

So it seems appropriate that in this issue we consider notions of "change": change that is positive, proactive, and forward-looking. This issue asks several questions about our relationship to change. Do we need to challenge Boston's design culture to take the lead from other area industries and become more catalytic and progressive ("Why Boston?")? What do our communities' thought leaders suggest are the most important ways to change our city today ("Agendas for Change")? Can we rethink the historically oppositional relationship between Boston and Cambridge in a globally competitive era ("Two Cities: One Future")? Do recent graduates believe that, without change, the profession of architecture can be saved ("Wide Open")? Also in the issue, a possibly painful but certainly amusing investigation into the ways that nonarchitects view us ("Architects Perceived"), a photo essay highlighting the design of the BSA Space, and some last thoughts about making Boston world class, livable, and *humane*.

Will Boston be an *avant-garde* crucible of design innovation and thinking in the 21st century as it has been in the past? The choice is ours.

These are exciting times for the BSA and for the city *ArchitectureBoston* calls home. When 19th-century Boston was growing and some of our city's finest works of architecture were rising on the newly filled Back Bay, the great essayist Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote that "nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm." He is still right. ■

David Hacin FAIA
Guest Editor

The Boston Society of Architects has invited **David Hacin** FAIA to guest edit this issue of *ArchitectureBoston*. He is a principal at Hacin + Associates and Sasaki Associates, a member of the Boston Civic Design Commission, and founding co-chair of the Design Industry Group of Massachusetts.

Thank you to the staff at ArchitectureBoston *and Stoltze Design for their incredible efforts to support my somewhat crazy foray into the world of magazine editing. What an amazing team! In addition, I want to thank the* ArchitectureBoston *Editorial Board for their support. Lastly, a special note of gratitude to Nicole Fichera at Hacin+Associates, a young leader who gives me great confidence about the future.*



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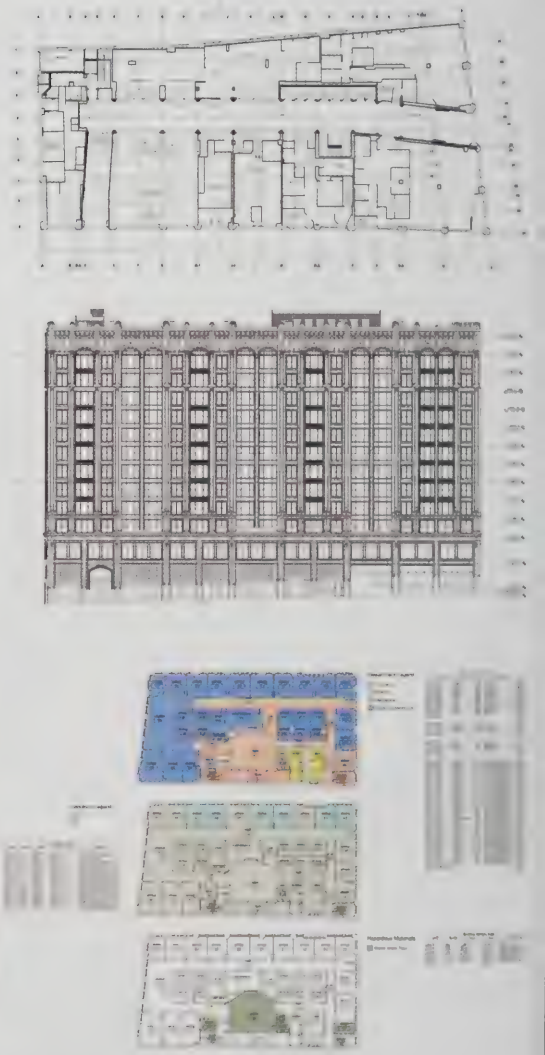
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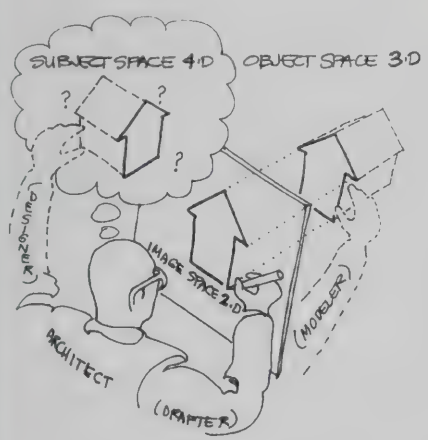
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On "Media" (Winter 2011) and Elizabeth Padjen

James Wines' essay "Mind and Hand: Drawing the Idea" was provocative, trenchant, and relevant. His reference to the increasing interest in traditional drawing among design students suggests the onset of what RISD president John Maeda has termed the "post-digital era."

I share Wines' advocacy of "dual skills" for the designer—I work as a "hybridist," using the more effective tool for the specific task at hand, then combining the two. Traditional drawing techniques accomplish certain things efficiently and well; the computer accomplishes others. Chirographic (hand) drawing is stochastic, messy, suggestive, and warm; digital imaging is ordered, clean, denotative, and cool.

Within the architectural design process, timing is the principal determinant for selection of the appropriate media. Traditional tools such as the pencil are conducive to early, impressionistic sketching because of the imprecision and fortuitousness that trigger ideas, whereas digital imaging is more effective for detail documentation later in the process or beyond—when public illustration of a solution is required. A "digital sketch" is something of an oxymoron.



Because architectural design is conceived and preliminarily developed during the sketch phase of the process—and sketching is so conducive to ideation—facility in traditional drawing skills is crucial to effective conceptualization.

Architecture, like music, is termed an "allographic" art; signified as distinct from "autographic"—in which a direct act results in the artwork, such as the case with painting or sculpture. Architects create intermediary documents which instruct others (e.g., builders), rather than directly realizing their craft. Those documents are usually two-dimensional representations, schematic or pictorial, of the eventual physical building which is the ultimate work of art.

To paraphrase Winston Churchill's famous observation: The challenge for the painter is to turn the mundane into the sublime—"paint into light." The architect's alchemical challenge is to transform graphite (ink, pastel, charcoal, watercolor) into architecture.

PAUL STEVENSON OLES FAIA
Interface Architects
Santa Fe, New Mexico

I read James McCown's "I Saw It on HGTV" with a strong sense of recognition, mixed with a wistfulness for simpler TV times. When he quoted one design-show host's catchphrase—"It's about going slick or going home"—I was reminded that watching HGTV is, for me, a lot like watching ESPN, MTV, or the local news. Quasi-hip idioms, jump-cut editing, loud guitar-driven music—the quest to capture young eyeballs drives shows toward what executives pray will be seen and heard as "edgy." Home improvement, home runs, homeboys, or home break-ins, the subject doesn't really matter, as long as they just keep watching.

Don't I sound like a cranky old guy? Well, I did have my bearings set way back in the 1980s when I joined the *This Old House* (*TOH*) team. Our leader was Russ Morash, how-to television pioneer and the son of a homebuilder, who said he was inspired to start the show by coming home one day to find the plumber's bill. What had that plumber done to make that money? Wouldn't it be interesting to unlock the secret world of the trades and perhaps even encourage a little sweat equity in those heady *Whole Earth Catalog* days? Pioneering a genre allowed Russ to play it straight—*TOH* showed the renovation process, more or less step by step. The before-and-after took up to 26 episodes to unfold, the big reveal was unknown, and folks got a good taste of how much time and what kind of thinking went into a plumber's, a carpenter's, even an architect's work.

During the 17 years I spent producing *TOH*, the how-to quotient dropped, and the product placement pressure grew, especially after the "brand" was acquired by Time Inc. The show made a tempting acquisition in part because it was so inexpensive to produce—show up at a house, and you've got a set and content—and HGTV's success is in part due to the attractiveness of that production model. McCown identifies how today's shows squeeze even more airtime out of less content by teasing and recapping: The pacing is "two steps forward and one step back, but it accommodates casual viewing and short attention spans." Not long ago, I briefly went back into TV to produce a show for HGTV; as I struggled to find the right rhythm, the network producer took me aside. "Bruce, I want you to imagine a 22-year-old guy lying on the couch with a smartphone and ADD. Your job is to make him keep watching." We went fast, loud, and slick.

BRUCE IRVING
Cambridge, Massachusetts

In her role as editor of *ArchitectureBoston*, Elizabeth Padjen provided an extraordinary service to the Boston Society of Architects, to the design professions, and to the Greater Boston built environment.

With talent, persistence, and intellect, she led an entity that captured and

articulated the highest aspirations of our profession. Constantly asking just how this or that subject proposed for the magazine would be relevant to the profession's contribution to the improvement of our environment, she ably managed to produce content that was always time sensitive and challenging, issue after issue.

She enlisted an incredible bunch of people year after year for an editorial board that met regularly, and discussed and recommended just what the content for upcoming issues should be. As a chair of that board for a number of years, I was continually impressed not only by both the high quality and diversity of the people Elizabeth enlisted but also by the interaction, openness, and creativity that she inspired at the monthly meetings. They were, for me, a regular highlight.

Not only did she lead with distinction, she wrote for the magazine very well, too. You could count on every editorial to be thoughtful, incisive, and often provocative. She cared deeply about both the form and the content of *ArchitectureBoston*, and it showed. We and our environment are the beneficiaries.

WILSON POLLOCK FAIA
Jamestown, Rhode Island

It's astonishing to look back on the growth of *ArchitectureBoston* and to understand the imprint of Elizabeth Padjen on its heart and soul. When we first batted around the idea of a magazine back in the mid-90s, through those familiar brainstorming sessions at the annual BSA retreat, the proposals ranged from creating a regional *Architectural Record* to a *New England Journal of Architecture*. However, the *ArchitectureBoston* we have today really evolved from Elizabeth's own unique vision for a conversation about issues: issues that matter both to architects and to the public.

Now that I'm on the AIA Board and engaged with members around the country, I've been delighted to discover the level of respect other AIA components hold for *ArchitectureBoston*. At a recent AIA Communication Summit in Kansas City, staff of regional magazines from New York and Texas expressed the highest regard for the magazine, and editors at *ARCHITECT* praised Elizabeth's work. Her intelligence and reputation make all of us in Boston look a little better, and a little brighter. Elizabeth's perspective on how we live in a world we are continuously designing reached thousands more minds than merely those of our members and friends here in Boston, and we're the better for it.

I will miss her constant presence in our ongoing discussion about the designed world, but we'll just have to rope her in on something else.

PETER KUTTNER FAIA
Cambridge Seven Associates
Cambridge, Massachusetts

At Elizabeth Padjen's going-away party, I felt compelled to stand up and thank her for the many times she had called upon me over the years to write a story for *ArchitectureBoston*. Even though the themes varied widely (from the spirituality of hot tubs to how bankruptcy affects women), each time I was honored that she "got" me—she knew what I was passionate about and that the topic was perfect for my particular voice.

As I spoke, I looked around the crowded room full of architects, engineers, designers, lawyers, planners, and others and saw that nearly every head was nodding; all of her writers shared my belief, that Elizabeth knew their passions and their voices, too. What a wonderful gift for an editor to have!

Thanks again, Elizabeth—we will miss you.

TAMARA M. ROY AIA
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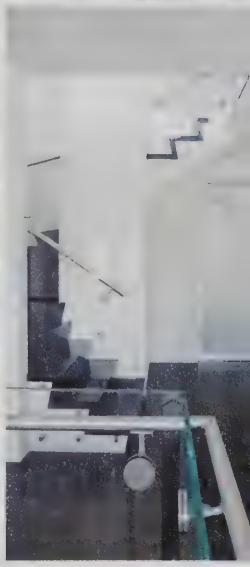
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On Exhibit

See a familiar place in a new way. BSA Space's inaugural exhibition, *In Form*, examines underlying forces that shape our city, from cultural installations like the 1970s "Why Boston" pavilion to the ever-changing landscapes of the Chelsea salt yards. Downstairs, the ground-level gallery offers information about Boston architecture today and throughout the city's history.

LEFT
Detail from an interactive map. It highlights significant places to visit, and will trace visitors' routes once they go.

Image courtesy over,under.

Derek Cascio is the co-founder and director of Design Museum Boston.

RIGHT
A still from the film. The 2011 MFA-sponsored series "Architecture and Design on Film" also explored Eames, Foster, the modernist architecture of Cuba, and more. Visit www.mfa.org/programs/film.

Urbanized

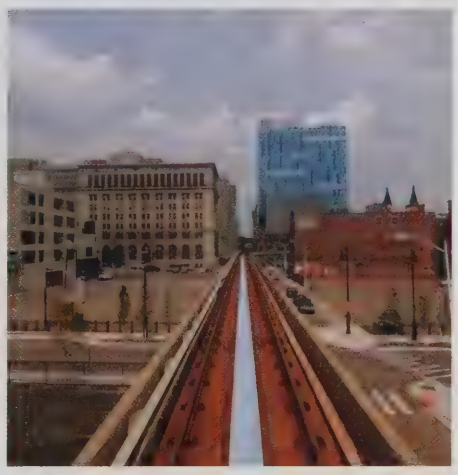
A film by Gary Hustwit
Museum of Fine Arts Boston
November 4, 2011

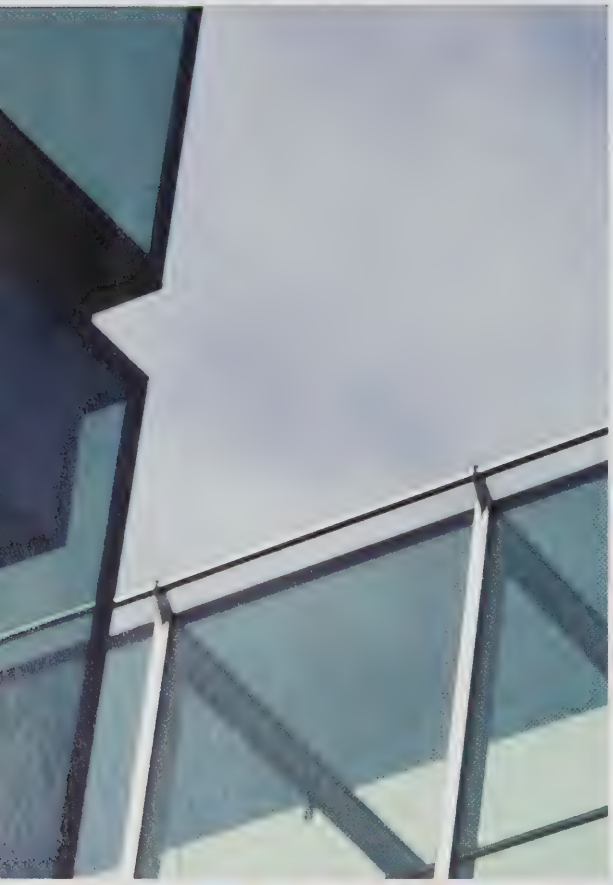
With 75% of humanity projected to live in cities by 2050, the role design plays in shaping where we live matters more than ever. This makes for great subject matter in *Urbanized*, the latest installment from director Gary Hustwit.

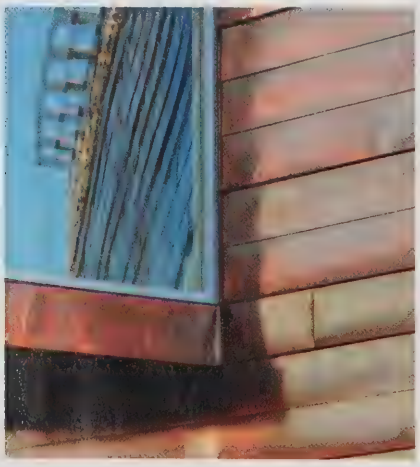
Like *Helvetica* and *Objectified* before it, *Urbanized* flows from story to story, seamlessly highlighting design solutions around the globe. Interviews roll against a backdrop of lush urban images as architects as well as civic, educational, and municipal innovators from Bogota to New York City reflect on the collaborative nature of design and what it means to those it touches.

Like cities themselves, the film choreographs diverse and sometimes competing ideas with varying degrees of harmony. It creates a broad, complex, hopeful picture of the world, arguing that design does not simply give form to what we live in, but how we live in it.

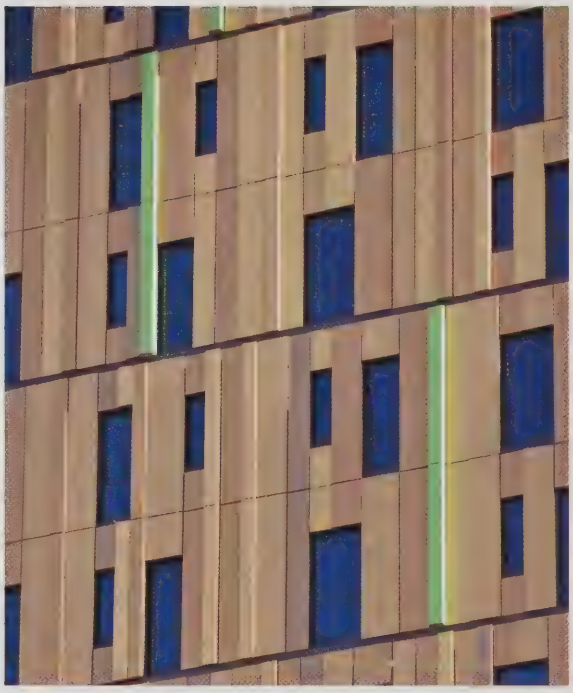
Think globally, act locally. The sold-out screening clearly indicates that this topic is on the minds of Bostonians, too. Place-making efforts are happening all around us, working to ensure that Boston continues to be a city where people from different backgrounds can come together in the hopes of making a better world for all







Considered: Spring Awakening





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

Museum of Fine Arts
Art of the Americas Wing
Foster & Partners and CBT

Massachusetts College
of Art and Design
Pozzi Wall
400 Huntington

Isabella Stewart Gardner
Museum Addition
Renzo Piano Building
Workshop/Shepley

Harvard Islamic Pavilion
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Hospital Museum of
Medical Innovation
Lead: Heinzapfel Associates





Seen

Lincoln Center Plaza
New York City

The world's iconic image of Lincoln Center is its plaza, an ersatz Campidoglio bounded by three temples to high culture. My image is a bus shelter at 65th and Broadway.

It sat in an odd and unlovely eddy: the plaza's back side, formed by a blank travertine wall at the base of Avery Fisher Hall and the Juilliard School. Their pedestrian plaza covered a monstrous underpass at the sidewalk below.

When I lived on Manhattan's East Side, this was my spot to catch the crosstown bus. Arriving at 9:30 or 10:00pm meant the company of sixty-something couples, playbills in hand, to wait in the dark.

The yawning maw of that cave (big enough for tractor trailer trucks) was the moment when Lincoln Center's confident midcentury urbanity gave way to the facts of its creation. A 14-block terrain—home to over 6,000 families and 700 businesses—had been swept away, with no little protest, for this artistic acropolis. In 1960, scenes from *West Side Story* were filmed in the condemned blocks. By the time the film reached theaters, the neighborhood existed only on screen.

The underpass is gone now, replaced by a grand staircase and a destination restaurant covered by lawn for public lounging. There will be a new bridge, a tendon of glass and steel designed by Diller Scofidio + Renfro, whose remaking of Alice Tully Hall was the first, much welcomed salvo against the superblock. The past few years have also brought redesigned plazas and strikingly renovated performance halls. Across from my old bus stop is an upturned wedge with seating.

The recent interventions are a worthy example of the way great urban neighborhoods improve upon their past indiscretions. But I miss the link to the place's underlying contradiction, the literal dark underbelly of the shimmering city.

Ian Baldwin is an architect and writer in Providence

ABOVE
The new view from Broadway, between 63rd and 64th Streets. Here, as elsewhere, Lincoln Center plazas now meet the city sidewalks with grand stairs.
Photo: Jake Rajs



Focus

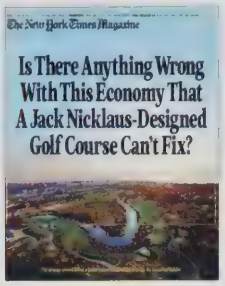
Bob O'Connor: Environments

Though recognized through his photographs for the likes of *Dwell*, *Boston Home* or the *New York Times Magazine*, Bob O'Connor has a passion for the abstract landscapes of everyday life. He finds beauty in the ordinary. This classroom, for instance, is so ubiquitous as to be generally overlooked. Here, instead, it becomes a composition of light, line and form.

ONLINE SLIDESHOW
www.architectureboston.com

FOR MORE INFORMATION
www.boboconnor.net









Covering the Issues

Gretchen Schneider AIA, LEED AP is the executive director of the Community Design Resource Center of Boston

Hope and Change...Greg Hanscom discusses "President Obama and the forgotten urban agenda" for ***Grist*** (posted January 17, 2012). At first, things looked good for cities. An unprecedented White House city post was created, grants to renovate sidewalks and foreclosed properties were given, government agencies were realigned. The Sustainable Cities Initiative even brought together the departments of Transportation (DOT) and Housing (HUD) with the EPA, and gave out $200 million to promote transit-friendly communities, but it wasn't nearly enough. Although tiny compared to the federal highway budget, Congress has largely scrapped Sustainable Cities due in part to a House move against "spending money to support 'ill-defined rubrics, such as 'sustainability' [and] 'livability.'" Hanscom laments that Obama has largely backed away.

To whom it may concern... Any designer who's endured a public comment process will find familiar territory in "Bad Wrap." ***Harper's*** magazine (February 2012) has printed a selection of public comments submitted to the US Bureau of Land Management on Christo's latest undertaking, *Over the River*. In this proposed installation, the artist will suspend fabric panels across 42 miles of the Arkansas River. Published here without interpretation or commentary, comments range from the pedestrian to the profound. "I am one of those 'less is more' kinds of people," writes one individual, offering a perhaps unwitting nod to modernist architecture, "I think the Grand Canyon is fine without a whitewash and the Arkansas River is beautiful without a scarf." The scarf is coming anyway. Construction begins this year.

Tee time... If you build it, will they come? ***The New York Times Magazine*** ponders this perennial question in their cover story, "When All Else Fails... Fore!" (December 15, 2011). Author Jonathan Mahler travels to Benton Harbor, Michigan—the poorest city in the state—where redevelopment hopes have been pinned on a $500 million golf resort development, complete with hotel rooms and houses on the greens. Can this possibly be the catalyst to attract a vibrant, mixed-income community? Benton Harbor is one of four "failed" Michigan cities now run by a state-appointed "emergency manager" who has merged fire, police, and building departments into a Department of Public Safety and combined the planning and redevelopment departments into one. It's a fascinating experiment in municipal management for a city building its way out of poverty.

From screen to page... Keep your eye on the supermarket checkout racks, there's a new shelter mag in town: HGTV has launched a bimonthly print edition. The second issue (February/March 2012) is predictably chock full of decorating tips and the requisite room makeovers, along with life in famous movie houses and features like "real estate spy." Perky, happy, and budget conscious, ***HGTV*** is *This Old House* meets *Rachel Ray*. Less earnest than its PBS-based predecessor, *HGTV*'s kitchen renovation tale is augmented by chip and dip recipes, not how to build a better cabinet. Will *HGTV* enjoy the same enduring presence in an already crowded genre? We'll see.

Smile... It might make you more productive. ***Harvard Business Review*** (January-February 2012) devotes a handful of articles to workplace happiness. In "The Science Behind the Smile," Daniel Gilbert reports that though there have been tortured geniuses, happy people *are* more creative, and reasonable challenges make them happiest. In "Creating Sustainable Performance," Gretchen Spreitzer and Christine Porath make a case for "thriving" employees. To thrive, employees need "vitality"—the sense of making a difference—and learning. To foster a thriving environment, employers should empower employees to make decisions, share information about company performance, minimize incivility, and offer performance feedback. Happy employees produce better work. Your bottom line will thank you.

Reconsidering Postmodernism

Institute for Classical Architecture & Art
New York City
November 11–12, 2011

1981. Tom Wolfe, days shy from publishing *From Bauhaus to Our House*, was invited to the inner sanctum of New York's architectural cabal, the high table at the Century Association, officiated by Philip Johnson. Wolfe's invitation was anathema to the traditional modernists in the circle. Johnson, at the apex of his postmodernist turn, assured all that Wolfe, despite the barbs in his forthcoming book, was not a threat, his presence ironic. "We don't read Tom for content," Johnson said, "we just read him for the rhythm."

Three decades later, at the opening night of the *Reconsidering Postmodernism* conference, Wolfe was again invited, this time not as bombthrower but as elder statesman. At the distance of 30 years, *From Bauhaus to Our House* appears as one of the last moments in which the debate over architecture's course crossed from the profession's cloisters into popular culture. Showing little interest in reflection, however, Wolfe instead restated his view that postmodernist architecture did nothing but reaffirm the orthodoxy that had subsumed US architectural practice since the European "White Gods" of modernism were imported in the mid-20th century.

The panel following Wolfe—Robert A.M. Stern, Michael Graves, Andres Duany, Paul Goldberger—could not settle the question of when postmodernism began (after World War II? in the 18th century?) or ended, or if it had ended. They agreed that the excitement over architectural history (whether sincere or ironic) that postmodernism had engendered was now exhausted in an architectural culture without unity or direction.

Indeed, Duany lobbed the grenade that middle-American architecture "need not have been such garbage" if the New York intelligentsia had paid attention to the hinterlands outside Manhattan. Instead, as Duany argued, postmodernism had legitimized a bland pseudo-classical and pseudo-historical vernacular entirely separated from the elite levels of practice. The entire US suburban and exburban landscape of the past 30 years, Duany said, was postmodernist, and in the most gruesomely vulgar way.

In attempting to learn from Las Vegas (which Wolfe proposed in his 1964 essay "Las Vegas (What?)" several years before Venturi and Scott Brown famously did so), American architects may have instead legitimized a new form of ironic classicism as our vernacular, and one whose builders view as entirely sincere. No irony is as dangerous as one that is not perceived as irony.

Patrick Ciccone is a partner and preservationist at Gambit Consulting in New York City.



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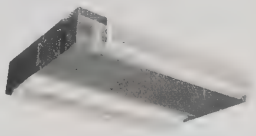
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Why Boston*?

***OR CAMBRIDGE, OR NEWTON, OR...**

Boston was recently voted the world's most innovative city. Some leading-edge innovators explain why they are here, prompting a few questions for the A+D community from our guest editor.

If you are a young, motivated professional with the world at your doorstep, why would you choose to make a career here? For years, this has been a constant conversation topic in the Boston architectural community, usually bracketed by excuses about the cost of living or the weather—as if our local design culture had little or no bearing on why talented people choose to stay here or, more important, come in the first place. Around the city, other world-class industries are flourishing. It's clear that neither cost nor weather has impeded their success in attracting and inspiring many to do their best work—right here.

How do leaders in these other industries "see" Boston? As the following articles describe with enthusiasm, Boston is a "hub," a "network," an "incubator" of ideas, a "proving ground" for transformational discoveries in the worlds of technology, education, entrepreneurship, and even theater. Most of these change-makers have relocated from elsewhere. For them, Boston is not simply a pleasant quality of life or attractive historic neighborhoods. Other cities fit that bill. It is a cauldron of talent and skills set in a political environment open to new ideas (think healthcare and same-sex marriage) that is special in the world and unique in the United States.

These writers are not architects, and their connection to the built environment is indirect. So why are their stories featured in *ArchitectureBoston*? Because, with the largest chapter of the AIA, top design schools, and dozens of admired firms with projects all over the world, Boston is still viewed as a restrained and conservative city, architecturally speaking. Although many of our firms build spectacular work outside town, there appears to be little appetite at home for engaging with a skeptical public to implement risk-taking design or even for encouraging the collaborative, interdisciplinary culture that our peers in other industries experience every day. Are we a global leader in biotech? In education? Absolutely. Are we leaders in design, urban planning, architecture, and landscape architecture? Maybe. *BusinessWeek* ranks our design community an impressive third behind New York City and Chicago. However, the following essays raise the question of whether our industry is fully taking advantage of that leading role. Are we reluctant to embrace and promote a civic identity of design, innovation, and collaboration? If so, are we falling out of step with the dynamic of a new generation raised with far fewer boundaries?

As the BSA builds a broader design community through its new facility on the harbor—Boston's historic connection to the world—let's ask ourselves what we can learn from our peers in other fields. In the years ahead, how can we firmly establish Boston's place in the vanguard of the global design conversation? How are we incubating and supporting, even cheerleading, the kind of change that will capture the imagination of the world, and the young architects and designers who look to us for leadership? Boston is a thriving city, and we are a strong group of professionals with access to unparalleled resources. All we've got to do is recognize and act on this enormous potential. Now.

—David Hacin

Boston is a research center.

When I lobbied for Microsoft to create a research facility in the Boston area, my pitch was based on two things: first, the thriving academic community, both in the areas that conventionally impact technology and in the social sciences; and second, the city's innovative spirit.

Boston has technological innovation. Period. Some of the key figures who created Silicon Valley and the high-tech industry were students here; our region has always been a source of talent for the tech industry. Now, we're seeing a robust research and start-up community, operating at that crucial intersection of the social sciences and the disciplines of computer science, math, and physics. I don't know of another city in the world that has these dual strengths to the same degree as this area does. Boston/Cambridge is on track to become one of the dominant players in this field.

We also have a wealth of young, dynamic individuals. I've read that Boston may be the "youngest" of all the large cities in the United States, no doubt because of its large university population. This strengthens Boston's place as a mecca for researchers from all over the world.

Microsoft Research New England, based in Cambridge's Kendall Square, is a multidisciplinary lab. We examine social media, algorithmic game theory, and many other areas at the boundaries of technology and social science. We want to help define the fundamental research that will be the basis of these new fields. Such work can have a huge impact on how we build and understand technology: how people use it and how it can change people's lives.

Multidisciplinary research leads us down unexpected paths. In our work at the interface of the technological and social sciences, much of our research was focused on networks. We were building models of and deriving algorithms from technological networks such as the Internet and social networks such as Facebook and Twitter. It turned out that variants of these algorithms were incredibly fast at determining network structures from indirect data—just the kind of problem that arises in studies of genomics. Thus, through our work at the intersection of technology and social science, we are now working at the intersection of technology and biology, using these algorithms to determine drug targets for cancer.

I first chose Boston when I was a postdoc at Harvard. Back then, I was charmed by the area's contributions to our national history. I choose it now because of its potential to help shape technology's future. We must draw upon that potential to create new, exciting fields that will set the stage for astonishing things to come.



Jennifer Tour Chayes is managing director at Microsoft Research New England.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
research.microsoft.com

IS BOSTON THE GLOBAL DESIGN LAB IT COULD BE?

Massachusetts has the
MOST R&D-INTENSIVE ECONOMY
in the world, with 7 percent of the GDP accounted for by R&D in 2007.
[2010 INDEX OF THE MASSACHUSETTS INNOVATION ECONOMY]

Boston is a humanistic incubator.



Roy Rodenstein is co-founder and CEO of SocMetrics. He also co-founded Going.com, was a founding member of HackerAngels, and blogs at how2startup.com.

For many entrepreneurs, Boston lives in the shadow of Silicon Valley, and, increasingly, of New York City. The density of start-ups; successful founders; huge hits such as Apple, eBay, and Google; and fast adoption of new technologies are some of the advantages the Valley has for its cult(ure) of innovation. So why am I working on my third start-up here in Boston?

Boston has stronger loyalty. In California, the LinkedIns and Yahoos of the world battle each other for talent with exorbitant salaries for developers, who start to live more as hired guns than true team members—much like what happens in professional sports. In Boston, if you "draft" a star employee, you have a better shot of holding on to him or her.

Boston is very open and supportive. The high stakes in Silicon Valley mean that people are hyperbusy and often skeptical of others. Here, people recognize that we're all learning and sweating for a vision. The spirit of camaraderie is second to none. Great community events such as Dart Family Dinner, which pairs budding entrepreneurs with experienced mentors, are open to all comers. I've even heard San Francisco natives say that our friendly atmosphere has no comparison.

Boston schools and neighboring communities are invaluable. The innovations and talent coming from MIT, Harvard, Babson, Boston University, and other local schools are more concentrated than anywhere else on earth. Steps from Kendall Square's new Entrepreneur Walk of Fame is the Cambridge Innovation Center, perhaps the most advanced office and co-working space in the country. Almost overnight, all the big venture-capital firms have moved from Waltham's frosty Winter Street to Cambridge, and great programs such as MassChallenge are distributing $1 million in prize money with 700-plus start-ups competing.

Some may say our city lacks sizzle, but we have impressive success stories of our own. Kayak, the easy-as-pie travel search engine; Zipcar, the car-sharing phenomenon; Skyhook, the original GPS provider for the iPhone; and HubSpot, the epicenter of the inbound-marketing movement, are all world-class companies that began here.

If you're looking to lead change and to share your innovative ideas and vision with others, Boston is a great place to be.

ARE THE DESIGN FIELD'S YOUNG CHANGE LEADERS STICKING AROUND?

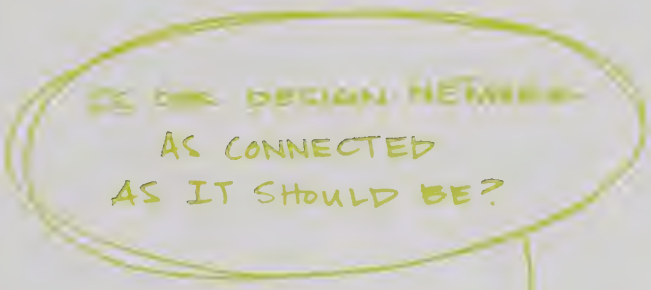
Boston has the
SECOND HOTTEST SINGLES SCENE *in the country.*
[FORBES MAGAZINE]

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[BOSTON BUSINESS JOURNAL]

However, Forbes *also reports that the*
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in Boston is higher than any other city in the country except New York City.

Boston was named the
TOP US DESTINATION
for international meetings and conferences.
[THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION & CONGRESS ASSOCIATION]

We're also one of the **TOP 10 MOST SOCIALLY NETWORKED CITIES** *in the US—ahead of both New York City and Los Angeles.*
[*MEN'S HEALTH* MAGAZINE]



Boston is a hub of interconnected networks.

Why Boston? Because Boston really is a hub: a place of connection between design and technology, between academic research and new start-ups, between talented graduates and experienced professionals, between business and innovation. Innovation happens when new connections are made.

Boston is a place of connections, and each node in the network is world class. Boston is a global center for design excellence. More than 60 colleges are in Greater Boston, with Harvard and MIT defining a global standard of excellence, and Massachusetts is one of the top regions for venture-capital funding in the world. This is part of the reason the Innovation Cities Index 2011 ranked Boston as the most innovative city in the world.

Our company works at the intersection of design and innovation. We help our clients uncover new ideas and then develop new products, services, and brand experiences. Our mission is to make everyday life better, and we do this by harnessing human-centered innovation to growing businesses. We have our headquarters in Boston, but we work all over the world: medical devices in Massachusetts, cameras in China, beverages in Brazil, appliances in Italy, AIDS testing in Africa, banking globally—wherever the need for design and innovation is.

If you were to visit our headquarters in an old shoe factory in West Newton, you would see an extraordinarily diverse group of people with backgrounds in design, engineering, science, psychology, anthropology, business, you name it. Everyone brings to the team his or her own area of expertise, experience, and personal network outside the company. This results in an exponential increase in connections. We designed our space—actually Sasaki Associates designed our space—to foster connections among our staff, with our clients, and with the community. It is a hub within The Hub.

We are just a small part of an ecosystem in Boston and Massachusetts of more than 40,000 architects, landscape designers, digital designers, art directors, advertising professionals, fashion designers, graphic designers, interior designers, and other professionals. And the design ecosystem connects to other clusters of excellence in healthcare, technology, and education that push the boundaries of what we do and give all of us a particular innovative edge. We all work with one another, learn from one another, and steal people from one another.

Continuum continues to grow in Boston because the talent is here, and talent is here because the design and innovation organizations are here. It's a virtuous cycle: talent attracts talent. This kind of virtuous cycle is difficult to start and imperative to maintain—and we have lots of competition. We must recognize how precious it is and ensure that it continues to intensify.



Harry West is CEO of Continuum, serves on the executive committee of the Design Industry Group of Massachusetts, and blogs for *FastCompany*.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
www.continuuminnovation.com

Boston is a proving ground.



Diane Paulus is artistic director of the American Repertory Theater.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
www.americanrepertorytheater.org

In almost every age before ours, going to the theater was a social experience. The Greeks, the Romans, the guildsmen of the Middle Ages, and the Elizabethans all staged their performances in open-air theaters during the day. People didn't just go to see the performance; they went to see other people and to be seen, to watch how other people watched, to flirt, to interact, and to judge. Theater was a busy, loud, energetic gathering place.

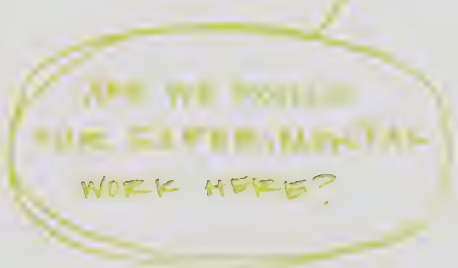
The architecture of these theaters reflects this engagement. The Greek and Roman amphitheaters, the circular Elizabethan theaters of Shakespeare's time, the semicircular Venetian opera houses—all were constructed so that the audience members could look at and interact with one another and with the actors. Only in the last century have theaters been built where audiences face the stage. It has become our habit to watch a play while sitting quietly in the dark.

As artistic director of the American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.)—where our mission is to expand the boundaries of theater—I am seeking ways to bring back this theater of engagement. Once again, the theater should be a place where we interact with one another and engage in society. Boston, a major cultural destination and a crossroads for innovators in so many fields, is uniquely positioned to support and encourage this kind of experimentation. In theater, Boston also has a history as a proving ground for new productions: Many shows traveled to New York City and the rest of the world only after first opening in Boston.

In 2009, we introduced our club theater, OBERON, on the fringe of Harvard Square. With flexible seats, a full bar, and a performance space that wraps around the room, the environment both engages and frees the audience to participate in the theatrical experience. Audiences continue to line up every week for *The Donkey Show* and other experiential performances. Similarly popular was *Sleep No More*, a theatrical installation staged in 44 rooms of an abandoned elementary school in Brookline. People came out in droves for this immersive piece, proving that Boston has an appetite for groundbreaking artistic experiences that defy expectations and break all the rules.

On our main stage, we create events before and after the performance that empower and involve the audience. For example, around this year's production of *Wild Swans*, Jung Chang's famous memoir about her family's struggles in China during the Cultural Revolution, we've collaborated with the Fairbank Center at Harvard on an extensive discussion series featuring historians, writers, sociologists, artists, and actors. Audiences do more than merely watch the performance; they participate in the conversation.

For almost three seasons now, I have been thrilled with the opportunities here to develop and revitalize the theater and the role it can play in our daily lives. Boston is world-famous for being a leader in innovation in the fields of medicine, technology, and higher education. This spirit of innovation also extends to the arts, and Boston should be known as a national leader in cultural innovation. Harvard University president Drew Faust has been an invaluable inspiration on this front, citing creativity as a form of knowledge and endorsing the arts as leading the way in how to think in new directions. I cannot imagine a better city to be the home and backdrop for the A.R.T.'s principal goal: to engage our audiences with theatrical experiences that are vibrant and vital to the contemporary culture, that inspire our audience and its participants to ask the central questions of what it means to be alive today.



Boston may be ranked as the **SECOND MOST SPORTS-CRAZED CITY,**

but it's also considered the **THIRD MOST INTELLIGENT CITY**

... and the **FOURTH BEST CITY IN THE COUNTRY FOR CULTURE,** *based on classical music, museums, historical monuments, and theater.*
[TRAVEL+LEISURE]

Boston ranked
THIRD FOR BEST RECENT-GRAD CITY.
[APARTMENTS.COM]

However, we also ranked in the
TOP 10 MOST EXPENSIVE HOUSING MARKETS
for family homes.
[COLDWELL BANKER]

Boston is partnership potential.

In 1870, Massachusetts passed the "Drawing Act," a mandate that provided arts education to its citizens to promote "manual and intellectual skills" and "spiritual growth." The formation of the Massachusetts College of Art and Design (MassArt) in 1873 and its evolution as the country's only state-supported art and design school continues to demonstrate the Commonwealth's leading role in design education. Today, as a newcomer to Boston, I recognize the great potential to build on this vision. But I have also observed the disciplinary segmentation of professional fields in the visual arts along with the relative distance drawn between design and art; education and art education; architecture and design—not to mention the further splintering of industrial, product, communication, and media design. This segmentation is exacerbated by the ever-widening gap between public and private domains. The resulting organizational entropy can be reversed only through greater collaboration between these inherently related fields.

Generally, isolation between disciplines hampers the potential for the economic leverage and research innovation that would result from productive alliances. The Massachusetts biotech sector has disciplinary synergies unknown to the design community, where equally distinct fields find common ground for advancing mutually supportive concentrations of expertise and enterprise.

MassArt—which believes steadfastly that publicly supported, accessible education in visual art and design is vital to the innovation economy and culture of the Commonwealth—challenges this phenomenon. We do so by crafting partnerships in the academic, corporate, cultural, and civic realms to build coalitions across silos. Although these partnerships require work, they also substantively contribute to the vitality, growth, and well-being of the city and the region. Some examples include:

- The Design Industry Group of Massachusetts (DIGMA). DIGMA is a statewide initiative to organize and promote the Massachusetts design cluster. Founded and sponsored by MassArt, DIGMA serves as a collective voice and advocate.

- The Colleges of the Fenway and the ProArts consortia. These, along with many other academic and institutional partnerships, provide shared learning opportunities, co-curricular and academic resources, and facilities.

- The Fenway Alliance. As a member of the Fenway Alliance, MassArt and 20 other cultural institutions of the Fenway work together to showcase the cultural and artistic resources found in this neighborhood.

- The Center for Design and Media. In a new partnership with government and industry, MassArt breaks ground this spring on a new Center for Design and Media. This will be a hub—a literal center to facilitate interaction within the campus community and with external thought leaders in the public, corporate, and private sectors.

John F. Kennedy said, "Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future." As we aim for that future, I will continue to support the smartest partnerships possible, partnerships that enhance education and cultural arts productivity for the sake of our social, economic, and civic health. Academic and professional collaborations of this nature provide laboratories for innovation and will allow art and design advancements to drive economic development and social progress in Boston and beyond.



Dawn Barrett is president of the Massachusetts College of Art and Design.

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TWO CITIES

Two cities with different issues, identities and planning priorities—for the first time, their respective urban-design gurus brainstorm on why the two cities are connected by much more than a river.

BY PRATAAP PATROSE ASSOC. AIA AND J. ROGER BOOTHE AIA

The Charles River both links and divides. While tourists, commuters, and joggers move back and forth seamlessly, in more meaningful ways, the two separate cities of Boston and Cambridge operate as two different worlds. Locally, the perception is one of separate parts. The "People's Republic of Cambridge" is seen as a universe apart from Southie or Beacon Hill. And in the global quest to attract new companies and new talent, the two cities may need to compete with each other, while being perceived as one by the rest of the world.

HOW CAN WE EMBRACE OUR ROLE IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY?

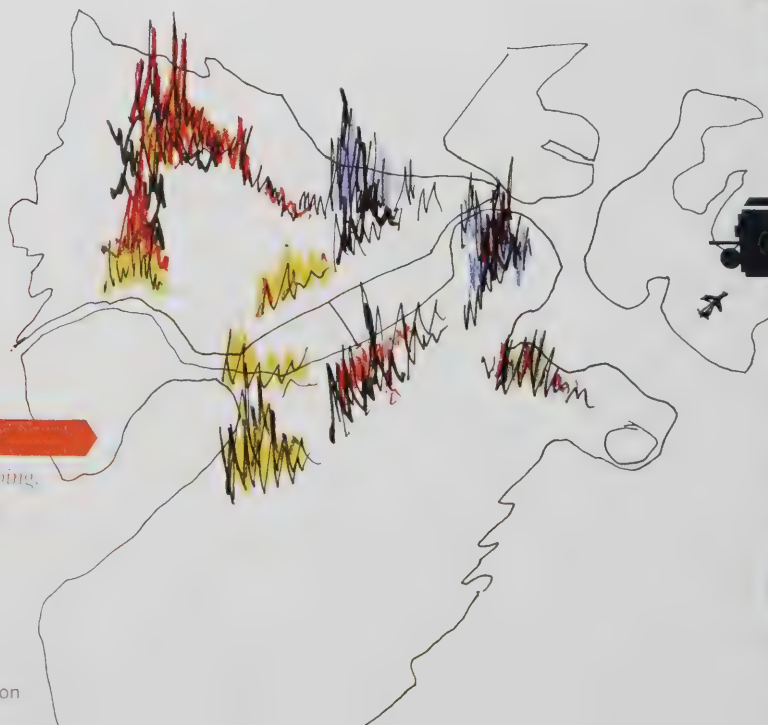
The world is rapidly shifting from a top-down corporate culture to a youth-driven culture of ideas; the cities of Boston and Cambridge are an internationally recognized ideas hub. Stunning facts demonstrate the depth of this young, vibrant culture. In Boston, one in three residents is between the ages of 25 and 35, while Cambridge has a student population of 44,639—a reasonably sized city itself—of whom approximately 20% come from abroad. Combined, we have the highest number of creative professionals per capita anywhere.

We are one region made up of complementary parts. This is essential to maintaining and strengthening our leading role in the New World Order of Ideas.

Prataap Patrose ASSOC. AIA is the director of urban design at the Boston Redevelopment Authority.

J. Roger Boothe AIA is the director of urban design at the Cambridge Community Development Department.

Sketches by Prataap Patrose. More sketches and statistics and be found at www.architectureboston.com



ACTIVITY PULSE

Daily life activities—shopping, museums, dining—ignore municipal boundaries.



CLUSTERS OF INFLUENCE

Many neighborhoods—such as Longwood or Kendall Square—are part of a global network in which the dividing line of the Charles loses its significance.

HOW DO WE COMPLEMENT EACH OTHER?

Cambridge and Boston, alone or combined, have enviable clusters of innovation: The Longwood Medical Area to Kendall Square or MIT to the Seaport Innovation District all attract the best of 21st-century investment and talent. This is further augmented by our extremely diverse population. Neighborhoods from Beacon Hill to Harvard Square or East Cambridge to Hyde Park offer a vast array of lifestyle choices and are complemented by centers of art and culture such as the BSO, the ICA, Harvard's Fogg Art Museum, and MIT's Media Lab. Both cities have been consistently voted "most walkable" by major magazines and indexes. In short, we are an array of world-class institutions and neighborhoods that provides a rich network of urban options and opportunities. All this is set in a dense, sustainable, easily accessible compact landmass that is well suited to keep us a global model for complementary economic and urban development. Our assets are larger than the sum of the parts. The challenge, then, is less about changing our urban setting and more about changing perceptions.

Architects and planners are at the forefront of influencing public perception through the facts and stories we choose to highlight and the ideas we reinforce through design. In our medical and educational clusters, we build to complement one another; in our physical connections and bridges, we repair and reinforce how mindful we are of the skylines and street views; and, in the physical and symbolic "lanes of innovation," from bike lanes to the Innovation Express, we connect. A healthy rivalry is part of what makes both cities richer, by increasing our depth of options for those who want to explore, invest, play, and live here. Architects and urban designers are in the business of visualizing alternative futures in which the parts and whole can be seen as different yet complementary.

The design qualities of the Boston region reflect our New England culture: Our history is one of different villages growing together into an intricate urban web, featuring diverse New England squares and commons as uniquely defined, livable centers. We are all enriched by respecting these special spatial qualities, even as we welcome excellent new architecture, expand our extensive network of open spaces, and increase the density of our urban centers. Architects can serve as curators and spokespeople for this concept of "different yet complementary" when designing buildings, streets, open spaces, and whole new districts that define and connect the complex urban fabric joined by the Charles River. Where could we be working to strengthen the perception of the Boston/Cambridge region as a whole?

OUR OPEN-SPACE SYSTEM:

The Charles River Basin has long been the defining public open space for our region, and the New Charles River Basin will extend that space to the harbor. For decades, the parks along the Charles have been disconnected from the public spaces of Boston Harbor, separated by dams, highways, railroad tracks, and other urban infrastructure. A design process, with representatives from Boston, Cambridge, and the Commonwealth, is transforming this "Lost Half-Mile" into a place for people. Recent successes include the addition of 40 acres of new parkland connecting miles of newly accessible river frontage from the Charles River Basin to Boston Harbor. More coordinated work is on the way. Where is the next "lost mile" for us to tackle together?

OUR TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM:

Cambridge and Boston are linked together by a limited number of older bridges along the Charles. The ongoing bridge-repair planning process, which engages all users, is nearing a successful conclusion. Well-designed construction that meets the needs of all modes of travel is underway. What might be new modes and points of connection across the river?

OUR COMMON WATERFRONT:

The improvement in Charles River water quality in recent years is heartening and strengthens the draw of the river as a place for everyone. Yet more ways for people to access the water and more destinations along the waterfront need to be made. Should there be a common vision for the river?

OUR INSTITUTIONS:

The strong, urban presence of our premier academic institutions along the Charles River and throughout our cities helps define our collective image. In the coming years, Harvard University, Boston University, and MIT are likely to be building new landmarks that will be visible across the river in both directions. The schools' future physical changes need to have input from both sides of the Charles. How do our institutions relate across our shared waterfront?

OUR ECONOMY:

Whether a brilliant new idea is brought forth in the Seaport Innovation District or in Kendall Square, we all benefit. The growth of ideas defines our collective regional economy and enables us to compete in the global arena. Can we embed entrepreneurship, innovation, and creativity into our urban fabric?

THE WHOLE COMMUNITY:

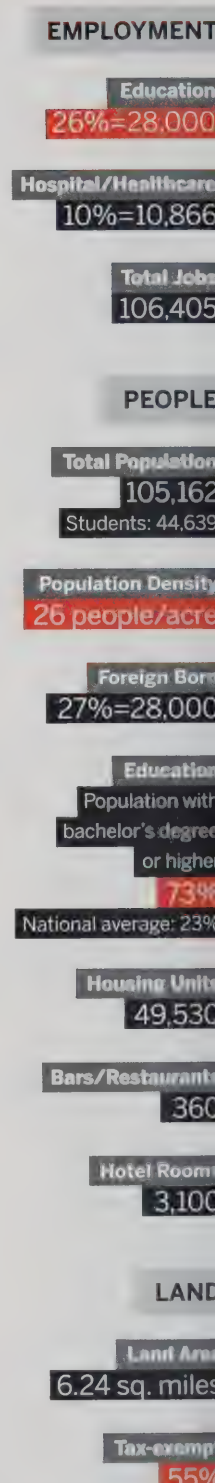
As we continue to grow and complement our differences, we should also continue to consciously expand on the narrative of what makes our shared story even more compelling in the new World of Ideas. Should a regular forum convene designers and nondesigners to focus on "celebrating our differences"?

It is an exciting opportunity for the two of us to jointly share our critical views of our two cities, building on our complementary differences and assets. We invite you to continue this dialogue. We believe that together, as architects and planners, we can create a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. ■



WATERFRONT CITIES

For centuries, Cambridge and Boston have been increasing land-mass, streamlining their shorelines, and growing towards each other.



BOSTON

9% = 47,630

22%=119,046

550,000

500,000

Students. 150,000

9.94 people/acre

27% = 168,000

4%

72,481

,970

3,400

9 sq. miles

0%

5%

0 miles

A CASE STUDY:

TRANSFORMING THE "LOST HALF-MILE"





At the heart of this process was a classic case of getting a lemon and making lemonade.

For more than one hundred years, the "Lost Half-Mile" was so called for the lost opportunity to connect the Charles River Basin parks to the Boston Harbor. It was not a place for people. That's changing. Where there had been a rusty warehouse district, there are now 40 acres of new parks, pedestrian paths, two housing towers, the US headquarters for the International Education First company, and the Zakim Bridge, with more improvements and connections yet to come. How this all came to pass is a useful case study for how Boston and Cambridge have worked together, looking for and finding common ground to link the communities physically and visually.

Burying the Central Artery—the Big Dig—had an unfortunate side effect in the Lost Half-Mile. "Scheme Z"—a spaghetti of highway ramps that were to emerge from the ground as the Artery resurfaced—was proposed to link the new downtown tunnels with the highways on the other side of the Charles River. The city of Cambridge, along with others, brought lawsuits, leading the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to form the Bridge Design Review Committee and the New Charles River Basin Citizens Action Committee, both with representatives of Boston, Cambridge, and the broader community.

This city-building endeavor transformed what could have been an ordinary highway bridge, lost in a maze of highway ramps, into the iconic Zakim Bridge, now so memorably marking the confluence of the river and the harbor. In addition, marvelous new parks, such as Nashua Street Park in Boston, Revere Landing Park in Charlestown, and North Point Park in Cambridge, now line both sides of the river. A "sinusoidal" bridge is designed to snake through this complex landscape and is currently under construction, soon to link pedestrians and bicyclists from North Point to Revere Landing. More is yet to come, as some $30 million in mitigation funding is still available to help realize the promise of the masterplan.

In addition, slightly west, at the junction of Cambridge, Boston, and Somerville, sits the 60-acre North Point development area. North Point will eventually include 23 buildings centered around a five-acre central common, connected by a shared-use path that will also complete the link from the Minuteman bikeway to the Harborwalk. The process of coming to agreement about what should happen here, designing the various elements, and getting them built has been extremely dynamic, sometimes contentious, and ultimately quite productive. Scores of architects, landscape architects, engineers, planners, government leaders, and citizens have toiled in a series of forums over decades to hammer out these new places. This is just one story of change that illustrates how we can successfully build on our common urban values as we design and "celebrate" our differences.

ABOVE LEFT
This late-1970s photograph shows the warehouse district known as the "Lost Half-Mile."

ABOVE RIGHT
This contemporary view from a new residential tower in Cambridge looks over the same area, highlighting two decades of change that have helped bring Cambridge and Boston closer together.

IN SPACE

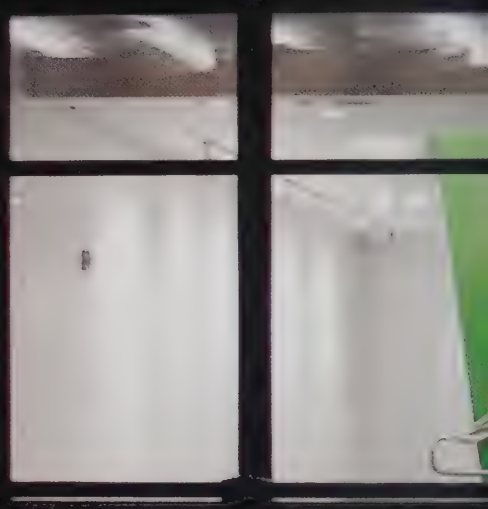




The Boston Society of Architects has a new home.

BSA Space is the Boston Society of Architects' new, highly public venue for hosting events, exhibitions, and programs, as well as the association's new headquarters. At a time when many of Boston's cultural institutions are expanding their public amenities, BSA Space is organized around exhibition galleries and meeting rooms intended to foster professional collaborations and broader outreach. A bright green stair can be seen, ribbonlike, through the windows of the renovated Atlantic Wharf buildings, leading visitors in and up to the galleries.

BSA Space was designed by Höweler + Yoon Architecture; over,under are the gallery's inaugural curators. These pages illustrate the project's design process and essential components, including materials and details. The graphics and data running along the bottom margin are similar to those prepared for other buildings in the *New/Public* exhibition currently on view.



Photography by Andy Ryan
Graphics by over,under



FUNCTION
Offices, exhibition spaces, and meeting rooms



The iconic feature of BSA Space is a vibrant green stair that folds upward to become the gallery ceiling. This continuous ribbon, easily seen from the street, functions as the project's public face.

SIZE
15,000 square feet

BUDGET
$2.9 million, or $193 per square foot (including furniture, fixtures, and equipment)

ARCHITECTS' FAVORITE ELEMENT
Stair/ceiling

STAIR ASSEMBLY
Delivered in six pieces

The stair was fabricated off site, arrived in six pieces, and was painted once completely assembled.

SELECTION PROCESS
Juried competition

CONTR
AIA Ilo3

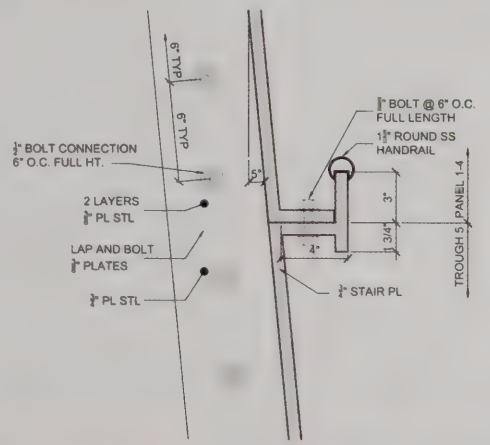
COMPLETION
Twelve months

LENGTH OF DESIGN PROCESS

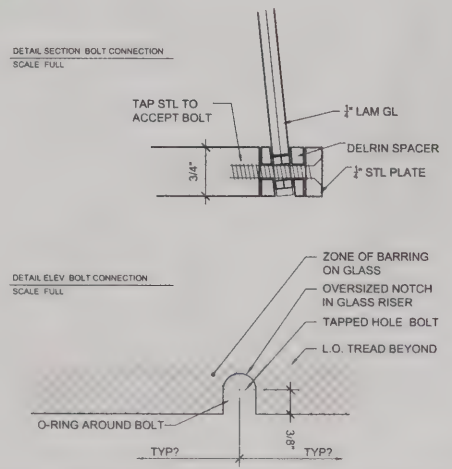
LENGTH OF CONSTRUCTION
nd-a-half months


1
2
3

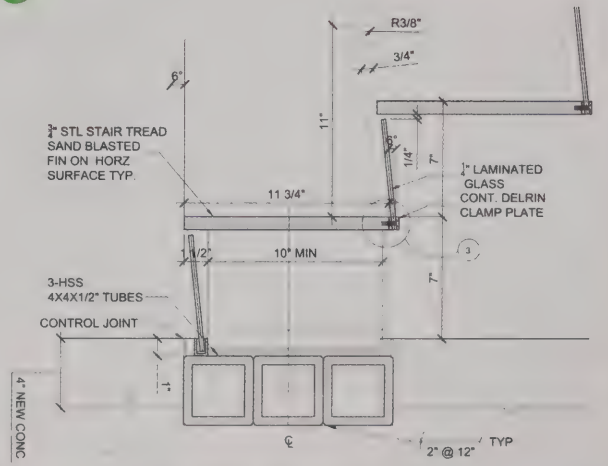
1


6" TYP.
6" TYP.
5"
⅜" BOLT @ 6" O.C. FULL LENGTH
1¼" ROUND SS HANDRAIL
⅜" BOLT CONNECTION 6" O.C. FULL HT.
2 LAYERS ⅜" PL STL
LAP AND BOLT ⅜" PLATES
⅜" PL STL
3"
3 3/4"
4"
⅜" STAIR PL
TROUGH 5
PANEL 1-4

2


DETAIL SECTION BOLT CONNECTION
SCALE FULL
TAP STL TO ACCEPT BOLT
¾" LAM GL
DELRIN SPACER
⅜" STL PLATE
3/4"
DETAIL ELEV BOLT CONNECTION
SCALE FULL
ZONE OF BARRING ON GLASS
OVERSIZED NOTCH IN GLASS RISER
TAPPED HOLE BOLT
L.O. TREAD BEYOND
O-RING AROUND BOLT
TYP?
3/8"
TYP?

3


R3/8"
3/4"
6"
11"
⅜" STL STAIR TREAD SAND BLASTED FIN ON HORZ SURFACE TYP.
6"
1/4"
7"
¾" LAMINATED GLASS CONT. DELRIN CLAMP PLATE
11 3/4"
1 1/2"
10" MIN
7"
3-HSS 4X4X1/2" TUBES
CONTROL JOINT
1"
4" NEW CONC
℄
2" @ 12" TYP



The CNC-milled desks are made of laminated birch with a white oak veneer.

PUBLIC DESIGN PROCESS
Primarily addressed BSA membership

PUBLIC MEETINGS ATTENDED
Four

REGULATORY AGENCIES INVOLVED
BRA, ISD, BED, DEP

SOCIAL MEDIA EMPLOYED
BSA blog, Twitter, LinkedIn updates

DESIGN ITERATIONS PURSUED
Many, though the original competition concept remained largely intact



Unistrut tracks are integrated into the ceiling to provide infrastructure for the exhibitions.

Open seven days a week, 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM
290 Congress Street, Suite 200, Boston, MA 02210

COME VISIT

NUMBER OF DESIGN TEAM PARTICIPANTS
Four (two principals and two designers)

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
Eight BSA members formed implementation committee

SPECIAL COLLABORATIONS
Branding exercise with Continuum, exhibition process with commander

FOR PROJECT CREDITS VISIT
www.architecturebostom.com

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Architects Perceived



An Irreverent Op-Ed *by Rachel Levitt Slade*

I need an architect joke. I've got a whole arsenal of quips in my head for every occasion, filed away by subject, so there's got to be one in there. Looking for a good duck/horse/doctor joke? No problem. Did you say drummer, accountant, or nurse? Accordion players, even? Have I got stories for you. But a zinger about an architect? I can't even conjure a light bulb–changing one-liner.

Maybe architects aren't that funny. And maybe that's why they're not in politics or on reality TV. Architects are, however, *inadvertently* funny (though floating design humor in mixed company is like trying to win a staring contest with a cat).

Le Corbusier, for one, makes me chuckle. His comical view of a disease-, dirt-, and chaos-free future so amused planners that they razed entire neighborhoods to test his theories. Here's what we learned from his "machines for living": modernism requires a really good janitor. In other words, you can give us nice, clean modern architecture, but unless everyone agrees to put things away, it's bound to get messy. Regardless, all Le Corbusian projects broadcast the immense confidence of a man who'd dubbed himself—*wait for it*—"The Raven." (*Ça sonne mieux en français, non?*) I suppose he fancied himself a superhero. He even had a uniform: those enormous circular glasses that Philip Johnson and (ironically) Jane Jacobs copped.

Speaking of Johnson, I suspect the old devil appreciated a hearty laugh. I once heard a rumor that Johnson would prance around his glass house in his underwear, for the benefit of trespassing architecture devotees. That takes gumption. And a friend of mine who sat next to Johnson at the GSD loves recounting how his thesis advisor, Mies van der Rohe, actually designed much of what would become Johnson's first built project. As Mies leaned over Johnson's desk assiduously sketching out construction details, Johnson impatiently whined, "I don't care how you do it, just make it *beautiful*!" Johnson's best prank was when he out-Graved Michael Graves by building the world's tallest Chippendale chair in New York. His Boston gambol—copy-and-paste Palladian windows in which the arched portion is actually a fake-out—is a minor laugh riot.

You'll discover more dysfunction than humor if you delve into the backstories of architecture's greats. Like a living incarnation of a bad Ayn Rand novella, Mies glibly abandoned his bourgeois German wife and three children when he discovered the contemporary avant-garde movement. Hollywood-esque Frank Lloyd Wright married thrice and fathered seven. Louis Kahn, though no looker, juggled two completely separate families and a mistress for decades. And in the documentary *Sketches of Frank Gehry*, Mr. Titanium proudly proclaims that his psychologist advised that he choose his wife or his career. He chose the latter.

I can already see the finger-waggers lining up to tell me to give these guys privacy. In the end, they'll say, judge them by their work. And I'll admit that the creative process can be painful, often to the detriment of personal relationships. In fact, I remember one late night in the studio when my professor compared my agonizingly chaotic design methods with giving birth. In hindsight, he was kind of right.

Floating design humor in mixed company is like trying to win a staring contest with a cat.

But within the realm of normal, these guys are nowhere in sight. Their troubled personal lives reveal a side of architecture that gets architects into trouble again and again. We're talking about a chronic lack of social skills and rampant narcissism. Sadly, this condition isn't limited to a few stray stars. I once moderated a conference panel on design/build, and just as the audience was nodding out, someone brought up the power that interior designers have over their clients. Sparks flew. "It's so frustrating," the architects complained. "Clients will do anything their interior designers tell them to!" Everyone seemed to have an

Rachel Levitt Slade is an architectural designer, writer, and the editor of *Boston Home*.

OPPOSITE
Instant architect!

anecdote. This was, indeed, a phenomenon, I decided.

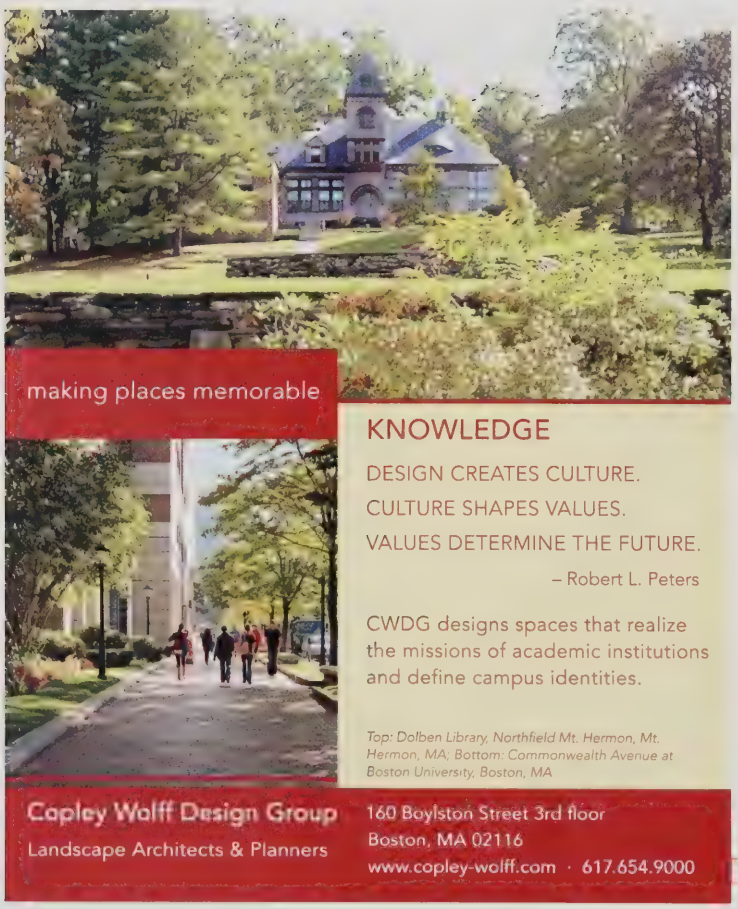
Well, interior designers can be flamboyant. They can laugh, cry, and overgesticulate. But they'll take you shopping and friend you on Facebook. They'll listen with rapt attention as you talk about your sex life. They'll commiserate when you miss your train or forget your mother's birthday. In other words, interior designers tend to be human in ways that architects don't. A lot of people like humans.

I thought he was out of his mind—and then remembered: no, he was an architect.

In contrast, I've had countless uncomfortable conversations with architects. They're often so busy proving they're the smartest guys in the room, they forget why it matters in the first place.

Which brings me to the only marketing seminar I ever took in my life. Stick with me here. I was 23 years old and working for a—you guessed it—painfully sincere and chronically underemployed architect. He wanted more business, so he hired me—green as a celery stalk and, pound for pound, about the same price. His strategy for getting work was simple. I was to cold-call presidents of Fortune 500 companies and ask them if they wanted his services. His plan was so earnest and so idiotic that thinking about it today makes me shake my head in wonderment. But I digress.

Because I didn't know squat about marketing, my employer paid for me to do a seminar with a marketing guru—a guy in a flashy suit and pinkie ring. The marketer's magical formula was thus: Scrap your sales pitch, and get prospective clients talking about *themselves*. Dig deep. Get personal. Nothing's taboo, including childhood, marital junk, and fantasies. The marketing guru then picked a dupe from the crowd, sat him down, and got him talking. For 45 minutes. I think there were tears. It was awful to watch, but once it was over, the dupe revealed that he was grateful for the chance to "share." Maybe too grateful—he followed the guru around all day mooning like a groupie. It was disturbing. "This is how you build trust with your client," the marketer explained, patting





his new sidekick, while we shifted uncomfortably in our seats.

Afterward I consulted with my mother, a psychologist, who explained that getting people to talk about themselves is a form of hypnosis. The modern world leaves little time for true empathy (which is why we have therapists). So when someone shows a hint of understanding and takes more than a moment to listen, he or she earns heaps of trust. It's a cheap trick, but I'm reminded of the one thing people always say when they meet Bill Clinton: "He made me feel like I was the only one in the room."

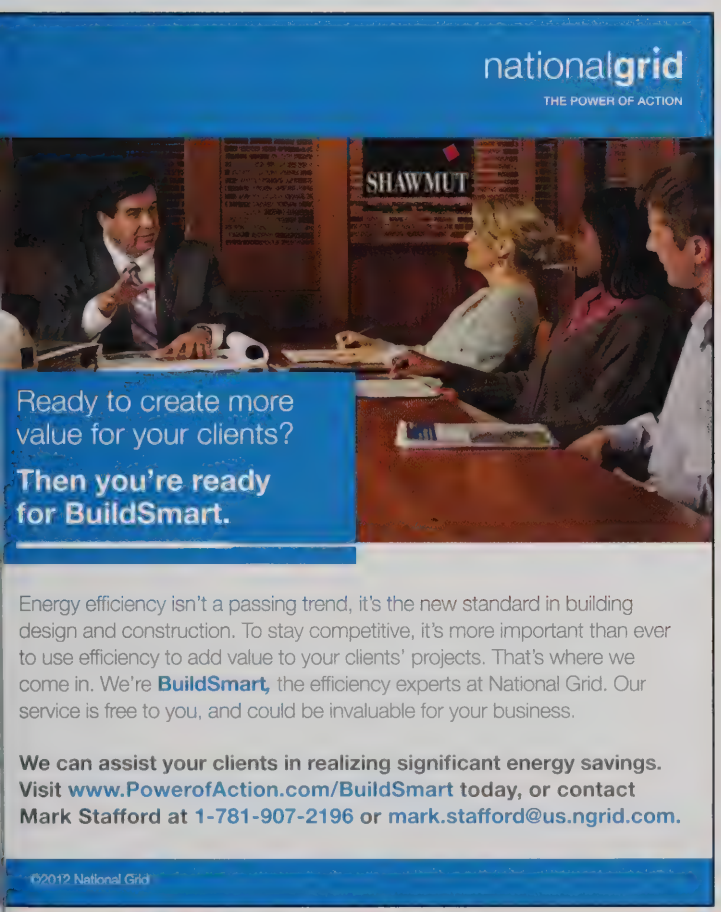
Although I love architecture and the people who have the patience to do it, whenever I try to hang with them, I feel like *they're* the only people in the room. Granted, I'm generalizing quite a bit. That said, if you've ever spent two hours in a clunky modern house, feeling your feet swell up in your professional footwear and shivering (because the A/C is set for penguins) while architects overexplain the obvious using abstruse language designed to shock and awe, then you know what I mean.

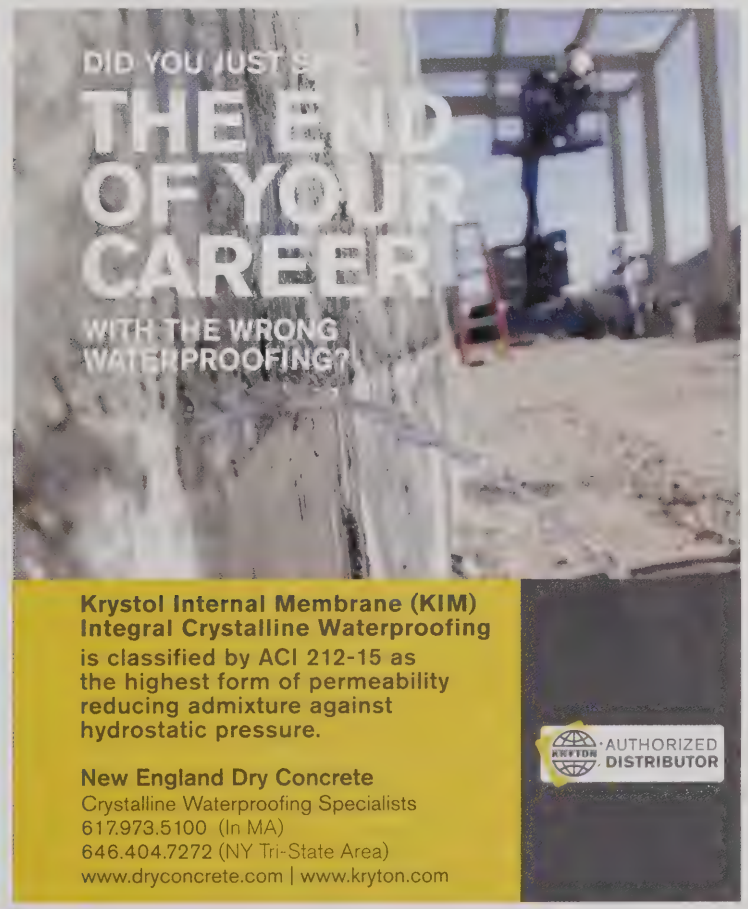
When I'm finally able to slip in that I'm also trained in the manly arts, they get a little sheepish, like they've been caught condescending to someone who knows the secret handshake.

One final story: A few years ago, an architect asked that I come to his office to see his latest projects. Once I arrived, he assumed a conspiratorial attitude, signaling that he was about to unveil a genius concept. And here it is. He'd identified six or seven projects recently completed by others that he just knew he could have done better. To prove it, he'd redrawn the buildings with his own façade treatments demonstrating his superior approach. He unfurled one drawing after the other, admiring his mastery of the art, shaking his head at the obvious blunders those deficient designers had made.

Finally, he posed a candid question: Should he send his re-renderings to the people who'd commissioned the projects, along with his calling card? It was one of the few times in my life that I was speechless. I thought he was out of his mind—and then remembered: no, he was an architect.

On second thought, this seems like a fabulous setup for an architecture joke. All it needs now is a punchline. ■







Young designers discuss their professional horizons and architecture's future.

On a Friday evening in December, Nicole Fichera, designer at Hacin + Associates, gathered seven of her peers from across the city for a conversation.

Nicole Fichera: I'd like to begin with an observation. When I look at the websites of young architects, I often don't see any "architecture." I see graphic design, photography, installation art, competitions, sculpture, painting. What does it mean for architecture if the definition stretches like this? Is this a generational anxiety, not wanting to limit our options?

Lian Chikako Chang: I don't think it's generational. There are so many different ways of practicing architecture. I see two sets of people in the field: those who group architecture with other "design" fields—graphic or industrial, for example—and those who group architecture with fields related to the built environment. Are we primarily interested in design, or are we primarily interested in the built environment?

Meera Deean: Sometimes I think, as architects, we talk so little about buildings. That's part of my issue with the profession—and part of why so many people leave it for other things. Architects don't know how to define themselves. It makes us unnecessarily modest, as if we shouldn't think of architecture as this big world-changing thing when we talk with other people. If you don't find your niche, something that's easy to explain, you feel engulfed in the "architect" stereotype.

Boback Firoozbakht: I actually never wanted to be an architect. I'm more interested in finding existing property; working with an architect to redesign the building/space; and then managing the final product, generating all-in-one efficiency. I'm a developer addict. I went to RISD to study existing buildings, and to see how performance can be measured based not only on economics but also on design. Design should be integrated in the process of a developer's project from the beginning to start evaluating its performance early. That's the only way to know the return on investment and the return on design—the "ROD."

Colin Booth: I think that's a key shift in the architect's role: being more integrated all the way through the entire life of the building. I'm training myself to focus



on design not only as object creation or experience creation. Of course, I still have passion for that, and it's an important piece of the puzzle. But we can't let the goal of a pretty picture in a magazine or our fear of getting sued dictate how we create the built environment and how we make a living.

As architects, we don't do legitimate post occupancy evaluations. I mean, we say we do and we kind of do, but nobody really does. There's real opportunity for better-quality construction—and a business model that is less susceptible to economic swings—if architects continue to work with clients to fine-tune buildings over time.

Nicole: So the relationship between how long our projects should last and how long we are contractually invested in them is out of balance. Our relationship with our buildings and our ability to get new work is measured in fleeting terms: aesthetics, pictures, press, awards, beauty. But beauty can be long term, no? Shouldn't we be proud of the fact that we believe in beauty? There's something aspirational about that, that people do respond to.

Colin: I have mixed feelings about it. On one hand, I want the environments that I'm in to be exciting the way that fashion is exciting. But it's really too bad that there are huge skyscrapers that take years of time and effort and money and resources, and then people react with a dismissive, "I don't know if I like it. It's a little bit like that other thing."

Beauty runs deeper than that, deeper than fashion. I always feel like I'm betraying my artist/designer roots by bringing up sustainability. Yet someone can be physically beautiful, but if I found out that they were also horribly abusive, I wouldn't care about the beauty.

Meera: That's a good analogy.

Nicole: Something can't be beautiful if it's poisonous.

Meera: What I think I hear you saying is that what architects do and what we are capable of doing is too important to just get caught up in pure beauty or what we think is fun.

Colin: People don't understand what we do because we don't understand what we do. We don't collectively know what value we have to our society and its future. Yes, beauty and design affect lives. You go to old, beautiful cities, and they make you feel fantastic. They give you energy; they make you feel alive. And we want to represent ourselves with our own version of

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
Julie Chen
juliechen.net



Guest Associate Editor **Nicole Fichera**, graduate of Northeastern University and designer at Hacin + Associates, blogs for Archinect about alternative modes of practice.

Nicolas Biddle, graduate of Wentworth Institute of Technology and designer at Elkus Manfredi Architects, was a 2009 SHIFTboston competition finalist with a proposal to activate the waterfront with barges.

Colin Booth, Boston Architectural College graduate and designer at Sasaki Associates, led the 2009 Tufts University and BAC Solar Decathlon team, and his home is in the Boston Redevelopment Authority's "Green Triple Decker" program.

Lian Chikako Chang, student at the Harvard GSD, is interested in how communication technologies are shifting the ways we find ourselves in the world. Her doctoral dissertation examined the origins of Greek proportion.

that energy. But we've got to balance that with the fact that we're quickly eating up all our resources, and it's only happening faster, and—

Nicole: And the beautiful cities become escapist places.

Lian: The ancient Greeks didn't segregate beauty into a separate concern. They had the very same language to talk about warfare or politics or health or craft, or what we call architecture. They thought of these things in equivalent terms and thus used the same language to talk about them. So beauty and strength, something working well, being powerful on the battlefield—all these things were bound up together. Something works because it's beautiful; it also creates economic value because it's beautiful and because it works; it's green because it works; it's beautiful because it's green; it's all of these things together. When we're at our best, we are able to do that. When we fail, we try to achieve some of these things at the cost of losing others.

Nicole: So value is a really big part of this conversation. What is our value, and how are we measuring it? How can we make that value "thicker" than it is right now? Because right now, architecture has a "thin" surface value: a pretty building to which we are connected for a very short period of its life. We have no external incentives to make sustainable, durable buildings.

Colin: Exactly. It's a building. It should last 100-plus years, not be past its prime in two. Architects should be able to end their careers knowing that their buildings aren't poisonous to the world. We need to adjust our business models and our contracts to allow us to have financial benefit from the long-term quality and performance of buildings.

We shouldn't wait for codes to tell us how and when to make sustainable buildings. We shouldn't complain that clients are too unenlightened or that there isn't enough money for what we want to do. We need to find out how to make more money delivering the quality buildings that we have a responsibility to deliver.

We have a role to play in moving architecture away from being a service industry of a throwaway society. Our entire modern way of living is throwaway. And the buildings are throwaway. Sure, I want to be a craftsman, and I want to get lost in sexy details, but I keep running into bigger and bigger issues. Based on the global challenges we face, that form of architecture is outdated specialization. World-renowned Alvaro Siza once explained how we must collectively defend our roles as "specialists of non-specialization." We need to redefine the "master builder" as one who creates a context for the architecture we know is worthwhile.

Boback: A big part of the reason I came to my firm was the chance to do programmatic development for developers. Designers should be inserting themselves in the process earlier. We should help determine the program from the beginning because we care about making buildings work better, and we are used to thinking about how people use space.

Nicole: So you're talking about starting our involvement with a building much earlier, and Colin is talking about continuing our involvement with our buildings much later.

Boback: While I was working with a prominent architect at another office, a client came to us and said, "We want you to do the interiors of these residential floors in New York City." We proposed that the developer put a public space on the ground floor with a cultural program—engage the public, enliven the street. It was our responsibility and vision that significant projects should have public space within them. We never got that job because the developers did not see a good return on their investment. We ran that risk because sometimes the architect has a responsibility to convince a client to create a better place with them.



Nicole: The ability to persuade is so important. Really, you can't get anything done unless you can tell your story well enough to get people excited—help clients or whomever understand your intent in a way that leaves them with a sense of experience, a sense of inevitability: If it already feels real, then making it real becomes less of a stretch for them.

Dana Maringo: Yes. When I got out of school and started working, I never realized how much we would be managers of people. It's not talked about enough in school. Developing communication skills and managing people are really what architects do.

I worked on a few design projects in Nepal with Architecture for Humanity. We functioned as a collective group who gave advice to other groups. There were lots of social conversations, government-related questions, and logistical things: how you get things built in a remote area, how you get materials. Not much of what is considered actual "design."

Nicolas Biddle: You have to work hard to create alliances with other people in your industry and other industries, and understand that you're working toward a common goal.

Nicole: Nicolas, you were a finalist for the 2009 SHIFTboston competition with a proposal to activate the underutilized Boston waterfront with a network of barges. You've done some real legwork on making this happen. Is there an update?

Nicolas: We've collaborated with the Boston Redevelopment Authority. There are plans to have artist installations on barges in the harbor, working with the huge artist community in Fort Point Channel. The paperwork is still in process. We're looking forward.

Dan Connolly: It's good to hear about the side projects people are doing. How do we, as young architects, keep each other informed about these projects? I don't know how we do that, whether we present our projects to other people or have a co-working space where we could work together on our side projects. I think that the interaction within our generation is something that we should build.

Boback: Yes. Despite all of the frustration—or maybe because of it—people are changing architecture. We're all doing side projects, chasing our interests. And maybe it needs more discussion.

The problem I have with conferences is that they always generate ideas. They activate. But there's that word that's missing again: maintain. I worked on a conference once that we called Generate-Activate-Maintain. But nobody maintained anything. People deflate. You get excited, you go to this panel, and you go home and that's it. We need to find real ways to activate and maintain the ideas we generate.

Nicole: Yes. So "maintenance" again, but this time it's in terms of keeping up a conversation. There's a relationship there: the fleeting value of an image versus the long-term value of a good building; and the momentary nature of a conference versus the maintenance of networks and proactive conversations over time.

Dan: There's no conversation going on among architecture firms in social media. At our firm, we encourage social media; but we talk to other architecture firms, and they're afraid of it. They're afraid of using Twitter.

Nicolas: It sometimes depends on the specialty of the firm. My firm specializes in retail, so we're in competition on superconfidential projects. We can't really share much information.

Dan: Social media doesn't necessarily have to promote your projects; just use it to build up communication and talk with people.

Daniel Connolly, Northeastern University graduate and design project manager at map-lab, created a blog called PanamArq about architecture and design in Panama.

Meera Deean, Harvard GSD graduate and designer at Utile, writes about the ways that participatory technologies can improve community engagement for better planning projects.

Boback Firoozbakht, RISD graduate, writes about the ways that design determines the success of real estate, business and self-promotion at designerasdeveloper.com.

Dana Maringo, graduate of Penn State University and designer at Anmahian Winton Architects, is a contributor to WorldChanging, an open-source network that empowers architects, designers, builders, and clients to share projects and ideas.

Meera: Yes, that's what we do, we blog. We try to take what other people are doing at work and connect it to our research or try to tie in what students or teachers are doing in school, and we write about it. It's part of the way we practice.

Boback: Firms sharing details and specifications would be amazing, if that could happen on a large scale.

Dana: Have you all heard of Open Architecture Network [now called WorldChanging]? It's an open-source architecture website where you can share project ideas and start collaborating to get them done. It's less about glorifying your own ideas and more about sharing them. You put your ideas out there, and hopefully someone comes across it on this website and helps pursue it. The idea is the important thing, even if you don't have time to do it yourself.

Back to side projects—Google allows their employees to work on whatever they want to for 20 percent of their time. Maybe it sounds absurd. But these personal projects end up seeping back into the company's overall success.

Nicole: What's interesting about the Google model is that it's legitimizing something which is obviously happening anyway.

Nicolas: For me, it's a question of ownership. If you're in a corporate structure—the way I am, essentially—a manager tells you what to do and you do it. But if you work in a more collaborative environment, you have ownership over what you do. Even if you have a specialty in one particular area, you're collaborating with people who have specialties in other areas. That assembly of people works on things that you don't have access to if you're in a specific concentration. It's frustrating when you're only connected to one small part of the process.

Dan: Young people look for firms that value collaboration. I like map-lab because it's a place that values everybody's ideas. It's not a top-down business model where the principal makes the decisions and everyone follows them. After the economy tanked, we found that being small, we're more flexible. We have three core staff members, and we've built a group of collaborators that we like working with and that likes working with us.

Some of the collaborators have their own businesses, and they work independently. If we find a client that





needs help, we can look in our pool for somebody who can help them.

Nicole: So if we are serious about collaboration and maintaining a conversation, how do we start? We have hopes and frustrations and ideas. The frustration eventually needs to move into something else.

Fear is a big part of the equation. There is a perception that young people are afraid to talk about their ideas; that it can be hard to get them to express themselves. Yes, we're young. No, we don't have it all figured out. But the world is full of voices, and we should not be afraid to use ours. And I have a suspicion that it's not just young people who are afraid to talk: it's most people. How do we push through this fear? It gets back to creating a context for the architecture we want to produce. If we want to change the world—and it sounds like we do—it's our responsibility to create an environment where we can talk about this change with each other, with our employers, with our clients, and with society as a whole.

Dana: I think it's important to go out and let people know what it is I do, and let people know more about architects. We need to get the word out there that maybe we're different than the stereotype. If you want to pursue your own projects and try to build yourself up, you can't be modest.

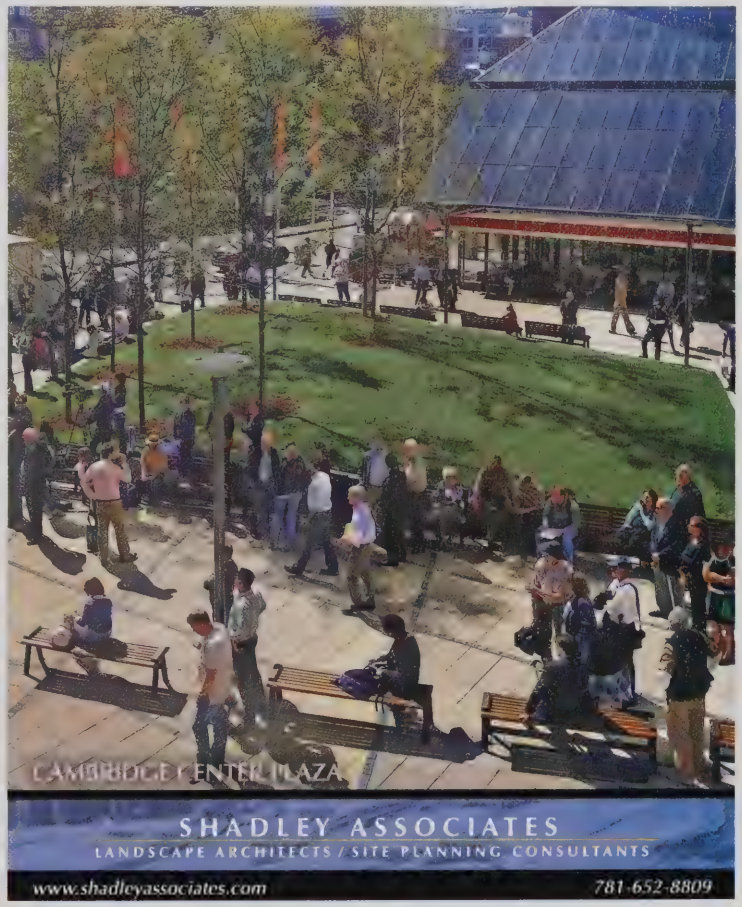
Colin: Especially with the economy changing. It might get a little better, but it's never going to be like it was, and that's probably a good thing. Crisis equals opportunity. Things need to change—we need to change them before things are changed for us. I want to be invested in the buildings I create. If I can't live in them and use them on a daily basis, then I want to know for sure that they are performing in a way that I can feel good about.

Nicolas: I'm a fan of a "less thinking, more doing" attitude. I want to see young people out of school be more proactive—more entrepreneurial. You have to figure out what you care about and go at it full blast—something productive, something tangible—instead of just pontificating all the time. I want to see stuff getting done. I'm frustrated.

Nicole: Less pontificating. Just do stuff.

Colin: Just do stuff. ■





Agendas For Change

We asked a spectrum of leading citizens what they hope Boston's near future will look like. Their answer: Be bold!

We're rightfully proud in Boston of our 400-year history of breakthrough thinking: Discoveries in the life sciences, technology, finance, and education have changed people's lives across the globe. [With Boston] renowned as one of the world's great "idea capitals," we need to apply that same, farsighted vision to our city's physical infrastructure. Let's be bold, Boston, when it comes to design, bringing 21st-century architecture to our historic neighborhoods and installing modern outdoor art as a complement to the many statues that celebrate our past. The ICA, new wing of the MFA, Boston Convention and Exhibition Center, and Zakim Bridge are terrific starts, but we can do so much more to realize the new face of Boston, rather than simply replicate the past.

Gloria Larson
President, Bentley University
Chair, Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce



Read the full submissions and add your own:
www.architectureboston.com

Cities and towns in Greater Boston should increase public excitement for architecture and design—making the region a world-renowned place to practice while capitalizing on practitioners' talents and vision. This can happen by celebrating:

Our past. Provide design credits on cornerstones or via virtual geotagged QR codes, instilling a sense of responsibility and pride in each building.

Our present. Officially declare a festive Architecture Month (featuring Common Boston Week, of course)

Our future. Instituting an annual competition, let's call it "New Build," that is a partnership between the City of Boston and the BSA and that challenges clients to work with emerging local practices on built projects

Justin Crane AIA
Founding Co-Chair, Common Boston and Board Member, Learning by Design



From: Ron Druker, President, The Druker Company
Sent: Thursday, December 01, 2011 3:29 PM
To: David Hacin
Subject: Re: Architecture Boston!

"Bold"! We need to be contextually bold...why can't we do architecture which isn't "the same old, same old"... amsterdam, santiago and berlin, to name a few great cities, do. and they're older and more "secure" than we...why can't boston?...massing relative to the context IS important, but boston is so obsessed with sameness that we don't progress as the above mentioned cities do....All we have a thing about "height"...it's the base/public realm, stupid!! Not height and "material" difference...we are standing still...not since pei/cobb's hancock tower has boston had a "great" building...let's be bold!!

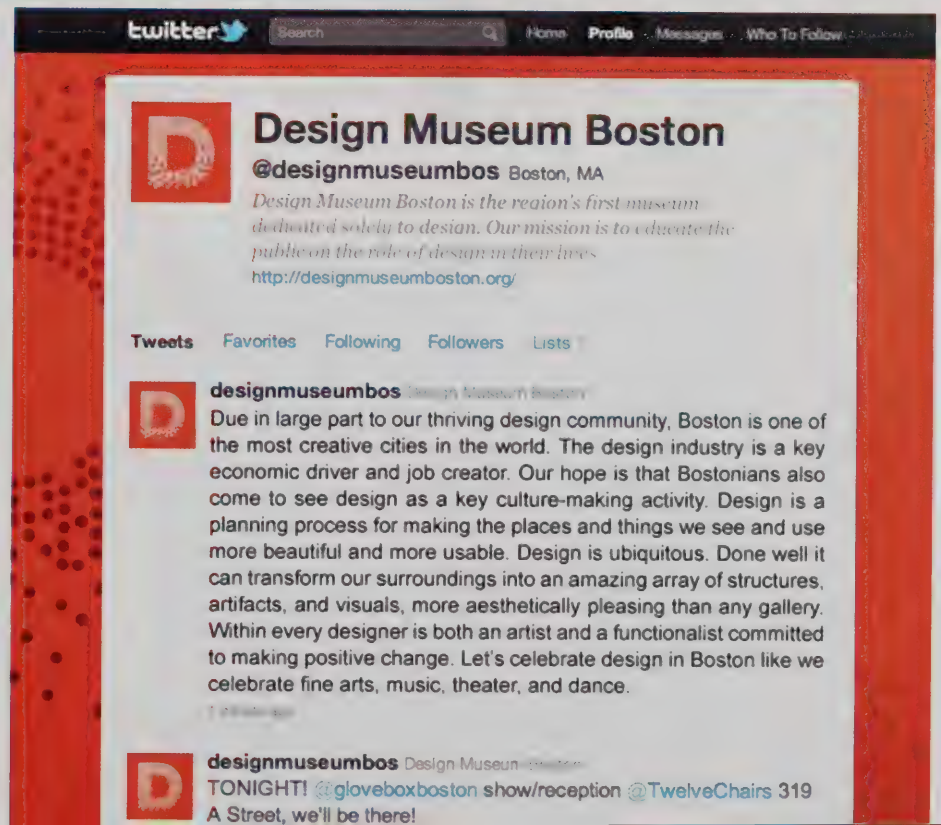
"Why not start now?"

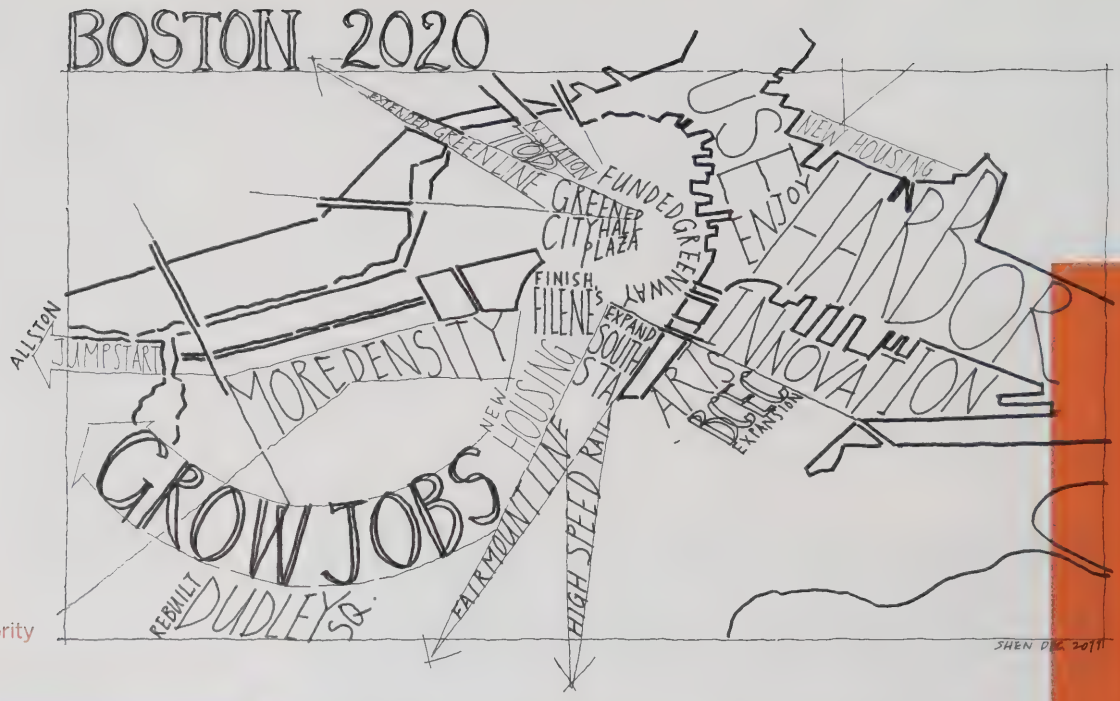
WHAT IF we reconsider the artery surface as a series of linked squares, gardens, and mixed-use development? WHAT IF a surface tram connected North and South stations—a pleasure as well as convenient?

Andrea Leers FAIA
Principal, Leers Weinzapfel Associates



LEFT: Tim Rowe, Founder and CEO, Cambridge Innovation Center
RIGHT: Pascal Marnier, director and consul, swissnex Boston, Consulate of Switzerland





Kairos Shen
Director of Planning,
Boston Redevelopment Authority

What's next? Prototypical urbanism. Architecture needs to provide more models for scalable, reproducible buildings in response to the need for more affordable and approval-ready architecture. The last 30 years have seen a tremendous focus on the design of site-specific, unique buildings. But even irregular and idiosyncratic cities like Boston are made up of a modest number of different types of buildings and sites. A few variations on the two-family and triple-decker make up most of the city. What's needed next is a new residential type that is more affordable, with smaller units and variations that allow it to fit into the fabric of the city's existing neighborhoods.

George Thrush FAIA
Director, School of Architecture
Northeastern University

From: Nader Tehrani, Head, Department of Architcture, MIT
Date: November 6, 2011 12:09:48 PM EST
To: David Hacin
Subject: Re: Agenda for Change

We should be [illegible] Communi[illegible] critical dialogue, and [illegible] this, Boston might als[illegible] democracy, while resp[illegible] involvement. Develo[illegible] that the integrity of [illegible]



"As a means to manage the rising water, the city will radically become a three-dimensional network extending deep into Boston Harbor."

Hansy Better Barraza AIA and Anthony Piermarini AIA
Principals, Studio Luz Architects

"Can it be done in five years?"

Boston has an amazing greenway network—ALMOST. It needs to be better connected. Let's start now.

Matthew Kiefer, Partner,
Goulston & Storrs

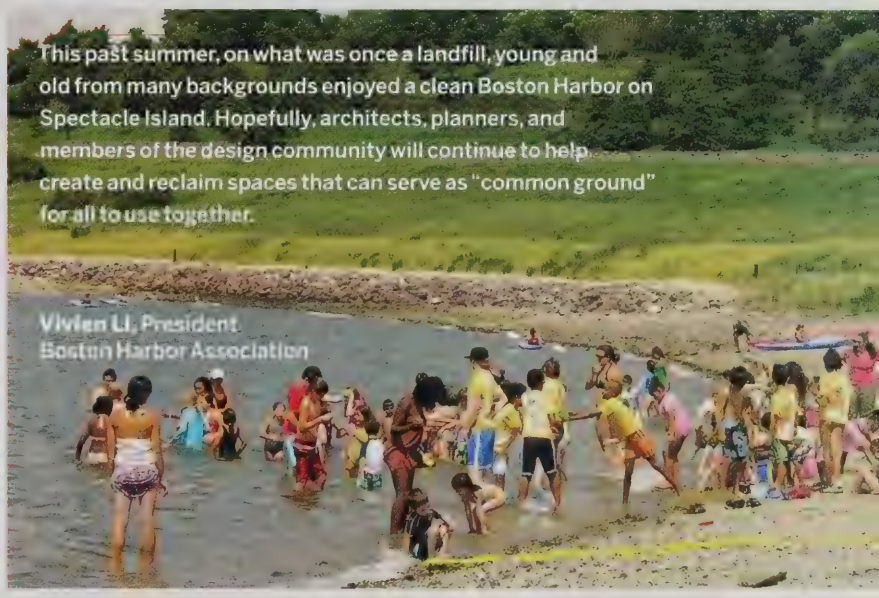
"Turn Boston inside out!"

Why is our collective creativity often so restrained and hidden, when we can set it free on a grand scale? Release the creative restraints

Derek Lumpkins, Photographer
Executive Director, Discover Roxbury

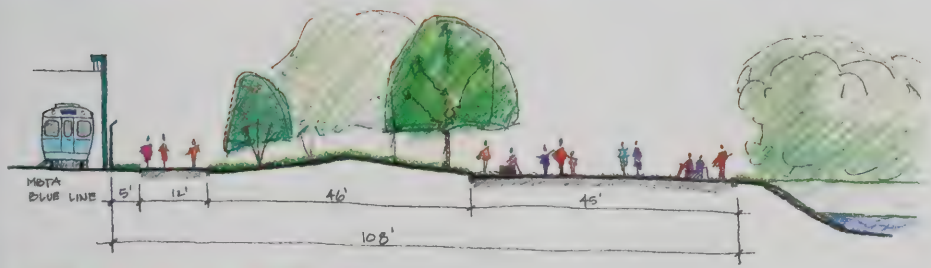
You've probably heard the news that Boston ranks No. 1 in having the highest proportion of 20- to 34-year-olds in the nation—35%. That's great news for those of us who are older! Boston has the extra local energy to take the lead in using design to reinvent how we age in the company of everyone. Let's summon Jane Jacobs' call to generate social capital by celebrating density, diversity, and design. Boston's got a head start with a built environment that has a lot to love, plus great parks, an ocean, and a river—endless opportunities for continuing to learn and options for getting around without driving. But we need fresh ideas for details that can shrink our lives as we age—threatening sidewalks, homes designed when life was 30 years shorter, dim restaurants, and too many unwelcoming places for culture. Boston's just the place to model socially sustainable design!

Valerie Fletcher, Executive Director
Institute for Human Centered Design



This past summer, on what was once a landfill, young and old from many backgrounds enjoyed a clean Boston Harbor on Spectacle Island. Hopefully, architects, planners, and members of the design community will continue to help create and reclaim spaces that can serve as "common ground" for all to use together.

Vivien Li, President
Boston Harbor Association



A New Greenway for East Boston
Tom Ennis, Senior Project Manager/Senior Planner, Massachusetts Port Authority



Jackie Douglas, Director, LivableStreets

From: David Privitera, Location Director, IDEO Boston
Date: Friday, December 02, 2011
To: David Hacin
Subject: How would you make Boston better over the next five years?

In five years, IDEO Boston envisions new-to-the-world innovations in green transportation, technological breakthroughs in on-demand augmented reality feeds, and virtual wayfinding tools that will make it easy to seamlessly explore natural landmarks from any point in the city.

As these public innovations take root and more Bostonians begin to co-create and remix their own city maps, a new era of optimistic, grounded civic engagement will bloom.

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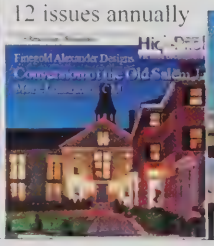
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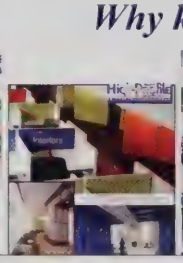


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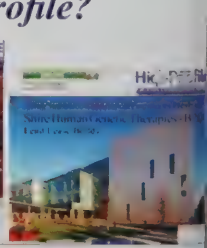












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Why keep a low profile?



Victoria, 34 years old

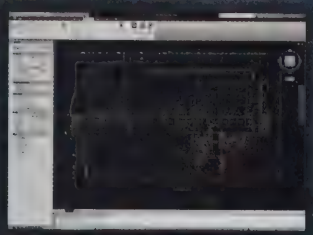
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Hobby: Roller derby jammer

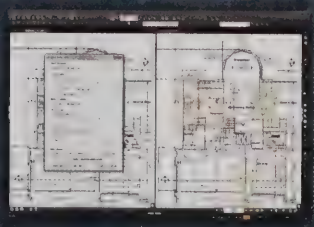
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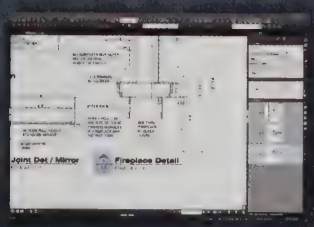
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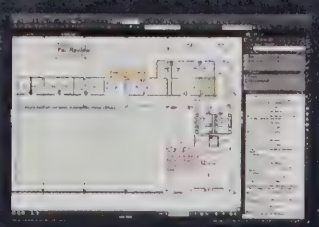
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Books

Switch: How to Change Things When Change Is Hard
Chip Heath and Dan Heath
Crown Business, 2011

"Change is inevitable and good." That's been a corporate mantra for a few decades, usually invoked by a CEO just as a company is about to announce massive layoffs. The word "change" has made its way into all ranks of corporate hierarchy. At some companies, human resources departments are now "change management" departments; that former public relations professional is now a "change evangelist."

Dozens of books promote "embracing change" and "leading change." Given the ubiquity of the term, is there anything fresh and new that can be written? Yes. Brothers Chip Heath and Dan Heath—respectively, a professor at Stanford University and a research fellow at Duke University—add a lively and engaging book to the mounds of "change" literature. Though primarily aimed at readers who want to affect change within corporate organizations, the Switch brothers take an expansive view.

Anyone who has taken a college psychology course will find the brothers' thesis familiar: Our psyches are in a constant tug-of-war between our emotional, pleasure-seeking side and our rational, stern side. Think Freud's id, ego, and super-ego. The authors use an easy-to-grasp metaphor to illustrate:

"Our emotional side is an Elephant [sic] and our rational side is its Rider. Perched atop the Elephant, the Rider holds the reins and seems to be the leader. But the Rider's control is precarious because the Rider is so small compared to the Elephant. Anytime the six-ton Elephant and the Rider disagree about which direction to go, the Rider is going to lose."

Positive change occurs, the authors argue, when we understand the particular forces that drive Elephant and Rider and, most importantly, the resulting paths they take. Chapters are titled "Direct the Rider," "Motivate the Elephant," and, finally, "Shape the Path."

Heath and Heath pepper the book with excellent, true case studies such as improving ways of feeding children in rural Vietnam, undertaking relatively simple procedures to save lives during surgery at urban US hospitals, and detailing ways to help drug-addicted veterans. This is the book's great strength. It's not just another corporate leadership book; it's one that seeks to apply its ideas to a wide swath of the human experience.

Switch puts a fresh spin on a widely published topic—and that's a refreshing change in itself.



James McCown is a Boston-based journalist and photographer specializing in architecture, design, and real estate.

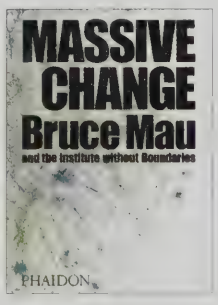
Massive Change
Bruce Mau
Phaidon Press, 2004

Massive Change is the 2004 catalog for an exhibition of the same name that set out to explore "the legacy and potential, the promise and power of design in improving the welfare of humanity." Or, as it's subtitled: "It's not about the world of design. It's about the design of the world." Is that all?

Co-authored by designer Bruce Mau with Jennifer Leonard and Mau's Institute without Boundaries, *Massive Change* is intended to provoke discussion, and to expand the definition of design to include much more than architecture. Unabashedly ambitious, it reads as a rallying cry. Designers will improve humanity. Designers will change the world.

In the opening passages Mau, through manifesto-like proclamations, demands a collective spirit of action: "WE will tap into global commons... WE will distribute capacity... WE will embrace paradox... WE will reshape our future." The book is divided into specific sections corresponding to specific "economies," such as Urban Economies, Movement Economies, Military Economies, Living Economies. Included within each chapter in short interview form, a series of architects, engineers, scientists, philosophers, and writers describes their corresponding work. These interviews are fascinating and inspiring.

A book this ambitious begs evaluation. In attempting to gauge the effect of *Massive Change* on the world of design and humanity (an impossible task, to be



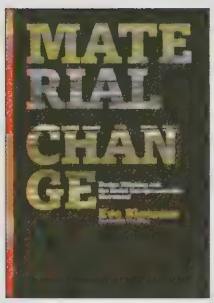
Rachel Paupeck a master of architecture student at the Rhode Island School of Design.

sure), I found myself wondering: Is *Massive Change* a black swan? The black swan effect, recently made popular through Nassim Nicolas Taleb's book of the same name, is the phenomenon by which "one single observation can invalidate a general statement derived from millennia of confirmatory sightings and millions of white swans." Has *Massive Change* invalidated all previous means in which we understood design? Has it changed the landscape of public discussion about innovative thinking, in all its various disciplines? Has *Massive Change* caused massive change?

Massive Change was published in a different era. In 2004, economies were strong, architects were employed, swoopy shaped heroic projects received extraordinary media attention and glory. In many ways, *Massive Change* aimed to be an alternative voice, directing design attention to more mundane yet complicated issues like housing the global poor, or coordinating mass transit systems.

Since then, the world has changed. Natural disasters in New Orleans, Chile, and Haiti have refocused attention on the design of infrastructure and everyday environments, while the global financial crisis has curtailed many big ego projects. Moreover, through recent, massive transformative movements such as Occupy Wall Street, the Arab Spring, and social media in general, massive change has been operating as not a top down enterprise, sourced in the traditional modes of power, but in a movement of the masses. It is found in the change that the average citizen affects each day. Eight years later, people are designing their world, their future—and as far as I can tell taking Mau up on his call to action.

Although it is hard to quantify the exact ramifications that *Massive Change* has invoked, it is easy to see the world changing, through the actions of the masses, and for the better. Black swan it is.



David Gamble AIA is the principal of Gamble Associates and the co-chair of the BSA's Urban Design Committee.

Material Change: Design Thinking and the Social Entrepreneurship Movement
Eve Blossom and Yves Béhar
Metropolis Books, 2011

What's weaving got to do with it? *Material Change* is an elegant and understated book about the power of design to affect real change in people's lives. The author, Eve Blossom, is an architect-trained entrepreneur. She founded Lulan Artisans in 2004. Lulan, a for-profit social venture, "designs, produces, and markets contemporary textiles through partnerships with artisans in Southeast Asia." US-based designers work with weavers in developing countries. The company builds on the strong tradition of weaving in Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos, seeking to raise the profile of the collaboratives and improve the individual workers' lives. By increasing the artisans' income, and thus their economic stability, Lulan diminishes the likelihood that artisans fall prey to slave labor and other threats. Lulan's products—pillows, scarves, clothing, and housewares—are beautiful, too.

While the mission of Lulan is to link high design with traditional weaving techniques, the book is as much about designing a sustainable enterprise as it is about developing a specific product niche. Blossom underscores the value of her design education. She credits her design background with providing the critical skills necessary to synthesize multiple variables and forge partnerships around a dynamic process.

Not insignificantly, the layout of the book embraces the concept of weave; the book's design is a tailored work in itself. Eight crisp chapters are punctuated with lush images of the artisans with their fabrics and looms. The text is often divided on a page, with running narratives about the saga of the company interspersed with biographies of other "disruptive entrepreneurs."

From the growing work of organizations like Architecture for Humanity to the highly publicized, celebrity-laden rebuilding efforts in New Orleans and Haiti, design for social good is part of the spirit of our day. Though it's easy to understand why the media loves these stories, one might also wonder whether or not regular people benefit. While at times *Material Change* veers too much toward the genre of personal diary and diatribe, overall Blossom demonstrates that a socially-conscious enterprise based on local expertise can create real, meaningful impact. Blossom has created a viable business model that refutes the notion that you can't do good and do well at the same time. The success of Lulan Artisans is dependent as much on the cultivation of compassion as passion itself, and all are better off for it.

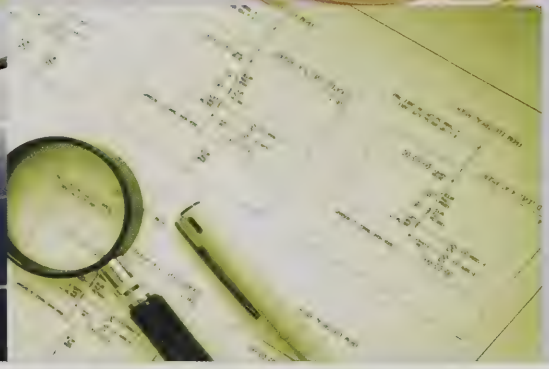
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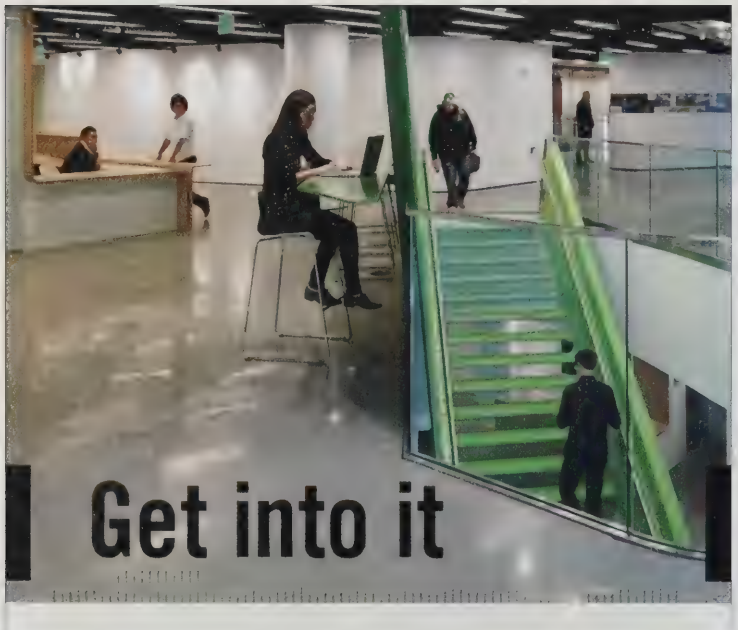
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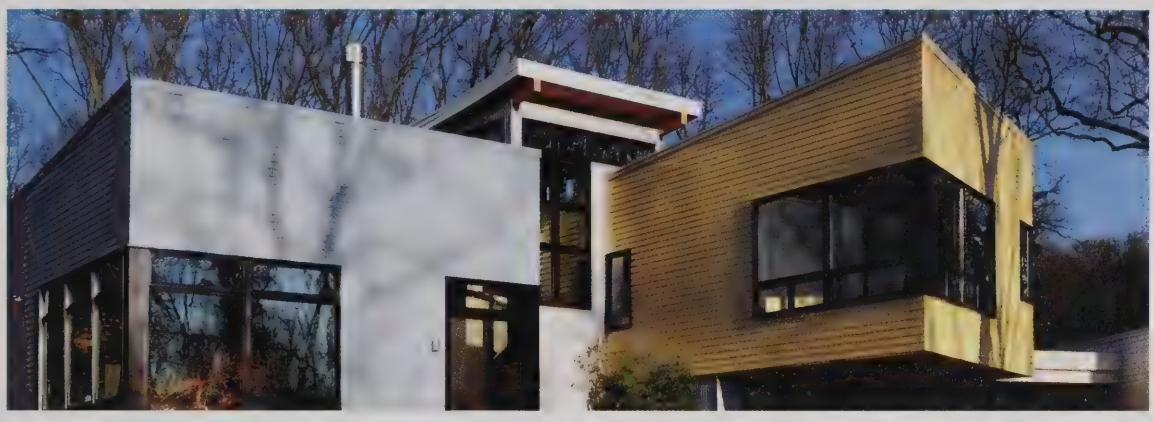
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Moving Up

Jill Medvedow is the Ellen Matilda Poss Director of the Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston.

RIGHT
Boston is rising in the Knight Frank Global Cities Index

Here's how Boston stacks up around the world

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The Global Power City Index (issued by the Institute of Urban Strategies, Japan) 20

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What keeps a city moving ahead? Alexandria. Venice. Baltimore. Detroit. All were once "world-class cities," bustling places filled with great institutional treasures, global aspirations, and accomplishments. Yet, over time, each lost its prominence. Boston, the 19th-century "Athens of America," once shared similar renown, and we still rightfully tout our historical firsts: the first subway, the first public park, the first public high school, the first public library. But, as novelist Colin Cotterill wrote, "Nostalgia is always a poor cousin to commerce."

How does Boston measure up today? Economists and urban planners measure cities' competitiveness using a variety of criteria: infrastructure, political and economic influence, culture, tourism, commerce, education, and transportation. Many recent rankings (see sidebar) take into account environmental and livability factors, too. Depending on the survey you choose, Boston comes in at number 19, 20, 29, 32, or 36 of all cities in the world.*

For a small city, these are notable scores. With a fraction of the population, we are on the map with Tokyo, London, Mumbai, Shanghai, and New York. But every city needs to continually adapt in order to retain its competitive edge. If Boston's future depends on the environment we create for innovation, ideas, and equity, how can we balance economic growth and influence with bold civic ideals and a broadly shared quality of life?

Twenty-first-century Boston shows great promise. Our private colleges and universities are leaders in higher education, our hospitals pioneer medical and scientific breakthroughs, and social entrepreneurial start-ups such as City Year and Year Up began here. In the fights for same-sex marriage and healthcare reform, we led the nation in the struggle for basic human rights.

In Boston's built environment, recent development on the waterfront, in the theater district, and in Dudley Square demonstrate fresh signs of dynamism. New bicycle lanes and a bike-sharing program bring welcome transportation alternatives. A short ferry ride connects downtown to the Harbor Islands and Cape Cod, while the Harborwalk brings residents to the sea.

Culturally, the city is experiencing a museum renaissance with a spate of new openings. The Institute of Contemporary Art led the way, followed by additions at the Museum of Fine Arts and the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. Each of these museums balance international presence and influence while contributing to local communities, economies, and future generations.

Remaining competitive is hard work; remaining livable, equally so. It requires long-term vision and policies that combine competitiveness with compassion, provide financial support for cultural institutions and artists, invest in education, expand digital and physical access, offer opportunities for immigrants, and cultivate strong leaders who value what Boston's strengths have long been: innovation, ideas, culture, and community. ■

2011 Knight Frank Global Cities Index

2011 Rank / City	Change in Ranking 2010–2011
01 / NEW YORK	0
02 / LONDON	0
03 / PARIS	0
04 / TOKYO	0
05 / BRUSSELS	+1 ▲
06 / LOS ANGELES	-1 ▼
07 / SINGAPORE	0
08 / BEIJING	+1 ▲
09 / TORONTO	+1 ▲
10 / BERLIN	-2 ▼
11 / CHICAGO	0
12 / WASHINGTON, DC	0
13 / SEOUL	0
14 / FRANKFURT	+1 ▲
15 / SYDNEY	+1 ▲
16 / SAN FRANCISCO	+1 ▲
17 / HONG KONG	-3 ▼
18 / SHANGHAI	+1 ▲
19 / MEXICO CITY	+2 ▲
20 / BANGKOK	-2 ▼
21 / MOSCOW	+1 ▲
22 / ZURICH	-2 ▼
23 / MUNICH	+1 ▲
24 / TAIPEI	-1 ▼
25 / SÃO PAULO	-1 ▼
26 / BUENOS AIRES	+1 ▲
27 / ISTANBUL	-1 ▼
28 / MILAN	+2 ▲
29 / BOSTON	+1 ▲
30 / MIAMI	-1 ▼
31 / CAIRO	-3 ▼
32 / DUBAI	-1 ▼
33 / KUALA LUMPUR	+1 ▲
34 / TEL AVIV	-1 ▼
35 / BOGOTÁ	0
36 / RIO DE JANEIRO	+1 ▲
37 / NEW DELHI	-1 ▼
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39 / JAKARTA	-1 ▼
40 / JOHANNESBURG	0

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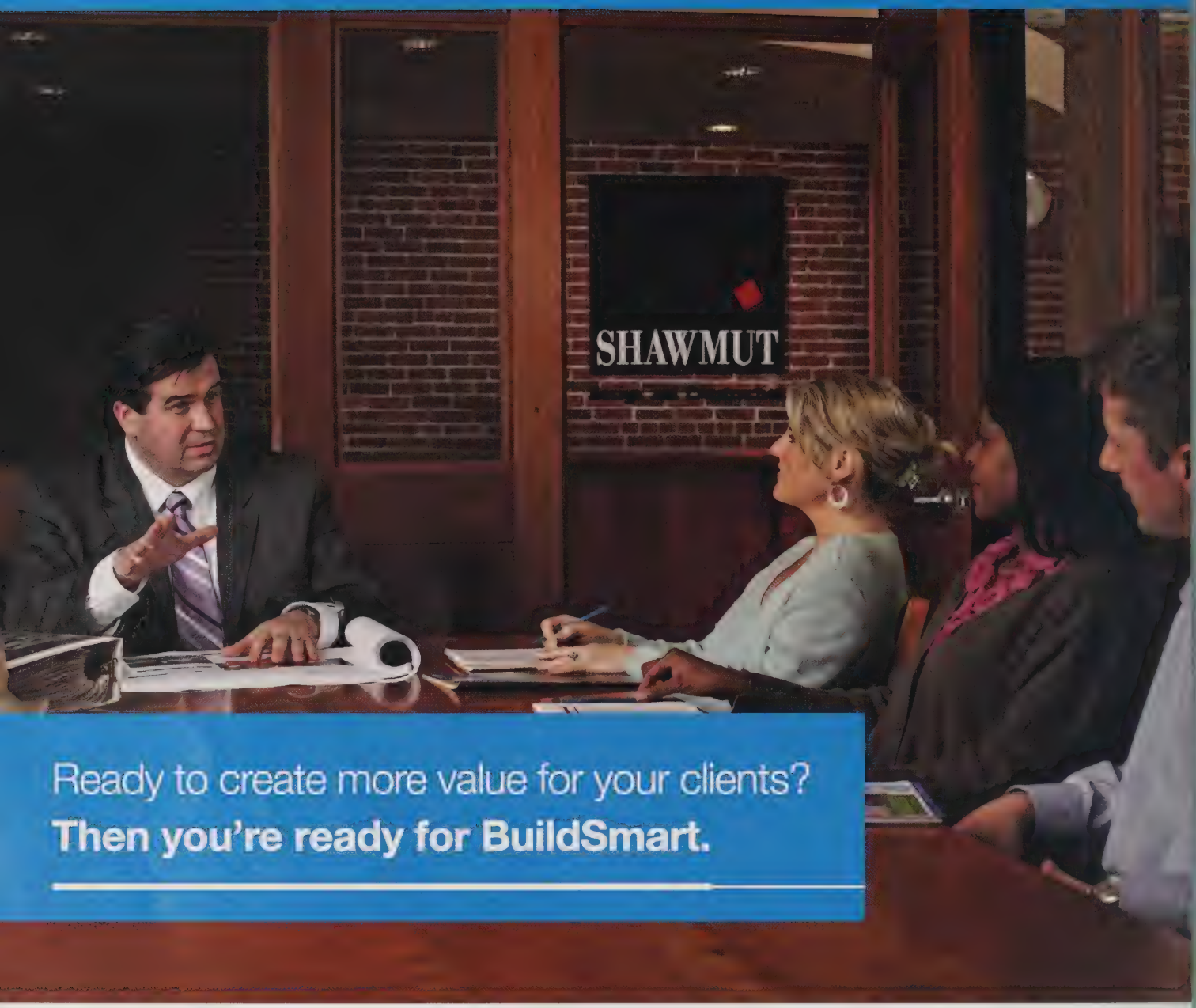
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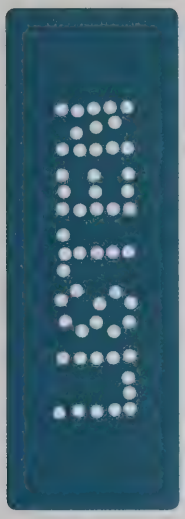
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ABOVE
Peter Vogel, *Duo*, 2006, speakers, photo cells, circuits, iron wire, 6½ × 47". Image courtesy bitforms gallery.

COVER
Dennis Svoronos, *Fort Point Soundscape*, 2008, steel and aluminum. Photo: Kyle Nelson.

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Lowell Hall, Harvard University ARCHITECT Robert Olson + Associates PHOTOGRAPHER Steve Rosenthal

How Does This Sound?

We live in clamorous times. Barking dogs, honking horns, lawn mowers, leaf blowers—about a third of the nation is regularly exposed to noise pollution above the level the EPA considers safe. And that's just the obvious din. The low roar of ventilation systems, the sigh of highway traffic, and the hum of electronics are nearly inescapable in the modern world.

And yet few human experiences are as sublime as deep listening. In a concert hall with fine acoustics, the end of Mahler's Ninth Symphony can be a revelation. Rain on the roof, the first spring peepers, a lover's voice—these are sounds we want to hear unmediated.

Not even the Garden of Eden was silent. But our soundscapes today are so cluttered that Congress passed a law in 2010 requiring manufacturers of the Prius and other quiet hybrid cars to build sound *back in* to their engines. Sponsored by Senator John Kerry, the legislation addresses the safety hazard to pedestrians of cars that can't be heard above ambient street noise—a surrender in the decibel wars if ever there was one.

Quiet is such a scarce commodity that people will pay a premium for it. Property values increase as communities become more peaceful; call it a serenity surcharge. The World Forum for Acoustic Ecology, with chapters in eight US cities, argues that access to quiet is a universal human right, albeit one mostly observed in the breach. "More and more, the acoustic environment is becoming a question of power, and of money with which to buy silence," the organization wrote in one of its founding manifestos.

When sound becomes noise, it can undermine shared social goals. Transit-oriented housing development in Dorchester was nearly derailed by complaints about the screeching trolleys making a sharp turn at Ashmont Station. Opponents of wind farms often cite turbine noise in their legal appeals. (In January, a panel of independent experts convened by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection found no adverse health impacts associated with wind turbines. But we surely have not heard the last whir on that.) Hospitals struggle to create the tranquility their patients need to heal.

We all need to listen better, to sound and silence alike. Architects and designers can help if they elevate the aural aesthetics of their work to the same plane as visual and spatial concerns. The first step, as always, is awareness.



PHOTO: Conor MacDonald

This is my first issue as editor of *ArchitectureBoston*, and so far it's a thrilling ride. I've known the magazine for several years, I subscribed to it, I even wrote for it as one of the nonpracticing "Other Voices" (September/October, 2006). Now I am honored to be at the helm of such a beautiful and well-regarded publication. I don't plan major changes, at least at the start, but I do hope to broaden the magazine's appeal and bring it more fully into the community conversation. And I hope to engage you all in this adventure: writing letters to the editor; attending sponsored public discussions; offering advice and cheer.

I once heard Tom Winship, the legendary late editor of *The Boston Globe*, give advice to a group of young reporters. "Make love to the city every day," he said. I took that to mean become *intimate* with it, learn its many moods and secrets, protect it but also help it grow. I try to live those words as a journalist and citizen of Boston. I look forward to deepening that relationship as steward of a publication that so clearly shares those values. ■

Renée Loth
Editor

NURTURE A NEW GENERATION OF ARCHITECTS FOR A BETTER WORLD.

The Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD), established in collaboration with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), is seeking exceptional faculty members in the area of Architecture and Sustainable Design for this new university slated to matriculate its first intake of students in April 2012. These are full-time tenure track positions at the level of assistant or associate professor, commensurate with the candidate's qualifications.

SUTD, the first university in the world with a focus on design accomplished through an integrated multi-disciplinary curriculum, has a mission to advance knowledge and nurture technically grounded leaders and innovators to serve societal needs. SUTD is charactertized by a breadth of intellectual perspectives (the "university"), a focus on engineering foundations ("technology") and an emphasis on innovation and creativity ("design"). The University's programmes are based on four pillars leading to separate degree programmes in Architecture and Sustainable Design, Engineering Product Development, Engineering Systems and Design, and Information Systems Technology and Design. Design, as an academic discipline, cuts across the curriculum and will be the framework for novel research and educational programmes.

MIT's multi-faceted collaboration with SUTD includes the development of new courses and curricula, assistance with the early deployment of courses in Singapore, assistance with faculty and student recruiting, mentoring, and career development, and collaborating on a major joint research projects, through a significant new international design centre and student exchanges. Many of the newly hired SUTD faculty will spend up to year at MIT in a specially tailored programme for collaboration and professional development.

SEEKING FACULTY MEMBERS (ARCHITECTURE AND SUSTAINABLE DESIGN)

I. Architectural Design

Candidates should demonstrate excellence in architectural design with a strong record or promise of significant creative achievement in the field through design work, design inquiry, professional practice, or a combination thereof with an emphasis on building culture and technology: sustainability; computational methodologies; contemporary culture and theory; design, technology and media; and innovation in structure and material assemblies. A professional Master degree in Architecture is required and teaching experience in a school of architecture will be valued.

II. Building Technology

Candidates will be assessed primarily on the record and promise of exemplary building technology research and teaching. Also important will be the degree to which a candidate can collaborate in research and teaching with others in diverse scientific, engineering and design disciplines. SUTD seeks individuals who are committed to advancing knowledge that will enhance the ability of designers and engineers to bring about a future sustainable built environment. Energy in buildings, advanced and high performance building systems, or daylighting and acoustics are areas of interest for this position. Other areas of expertise in building technologies will also be considered. A doctoral degree is preferred but not required, while teaching experience in a school of architecture or engineering will be valued.

III. Computation

Singapore University of Technology and Design seeks tenure track candidates interested in teaching and research involving digital technologies for the Architecture and Sustainable Design pillar of SUTD. We seek faculty candidates well versed in the virtual and physical design space in every facet of an architecture curriculum, in exploring research questions broadly in areas of parametric design, simulation, fabrication and performance-based design. The candidate must be able to instruct students in application based software and theory in a specified area. Most important we seek leadership from creative faculty interested in advancing the field.

IV. Theory and Culture

Candidates are expected to demonstrate a proven record of scholarship and teaching in topics of the history, theory and culture of architecture. Their work should investigate ways in which architecture reveals and reflects cultural, historic and socioeconomic dynamics at a variety of spatial and temporal scales. In their teaching, they should be able to show how architectural production is linked to shifts in technological paradigms, ideological world-views, societal beliefs and artistic and creative enterprises. Candidates will be expected to have a strong awareness of global history and/or how manifestations of technology and science affect design and society.

If you want to be part of the founding faculty with a focus on Architecture and Sustainable Design, please apply to SUTD at **www.sutd.edu.sg**

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On "Change" (Spring 2012)

Rachel Levitt Slade's "Architects Perceived," however challenging, should be a welcome reminder to architects and design professionals that we should apply critical thinking not only to our own work but also to ourselves and how we personally and professionally engage the world outside our limited sphere. While there are difficult trade-offs in creative professions and working outside conventional thinking, much of Slade's critique regarding disconnected architects rings true with commentary I hear from others outside the profession.

From the earliest stages of design education, we are taught to be highly critical and debate architectural ideas on their intellectual merits. In the controlled space of the academy, we are free from many real contingencies when solving design problems. And although it may be a necessary and liberating experience to test the limits of architectural logic and language in theoretical confines, we must recognize that the same rules do not apply outside the studio—especially when it comes to our engagement with others. Competitive posturing, obtuse language, insincere consideration of clients' objectives, and other affectations may be symptomatic of the academic environment, but they do not fly especially well after graduation. In practice, the combination of competition, marketing, and constraints of time and money can also prevent healthy interaction with the broader world.

As Slade notes, artifice is no substitute for real engagement, whether with one's client or oneself. Some intellectual honesty and self-criticism might go a long way to help us engage those around us in a more human way. It is, after all, the premise of a generalist profession to broaden our knowledge of the world around us: there is no reason it must be limited to the design of buildings.

TOM MURDOUGH, ASSOC. AIA
Murdough Design
Boston

Unlike the socially unskilled in other professions, architects know how to dress well, and this obscures their less desirable traits from all but the closest observers. Woe to the client or new hire—or spouse—who chooses the wrong one! "Emotional intelligence" is a relatively new concept, as is noting its lack. Frank Lloyd Wright was ostracized from Oak Park society for his loose morals, but he was never called defective. The architects of the last century escaped being thus branded. What about this century's? Our standards for social acceptability require us to be "interesting" beyond our inherently boring jobs; every new business book tells us that our creativity is a cultural advantage we aren't fully exploiting. But just when we recognize the need to define our worth beyond our livelihood, we are unable to earn one.

Searching for a nonvisual joke about architects reveals more than just an image problem; there is no simple punch line. I share Rachel Levitt Slade's situation: I pursued architecture in college and found easier success first as a stand-up comic and now as a marketer for the design industry. We're both square pegs in the oddly shaped and shrinking hole that is the design profession.

Do architects have an image problem? Ha! We're speaking of a profession that is harder than ever before to get into. Not finding a ready place for your creative desire gives perspective on the incongruities of the profession: the sacred cows, the shibboleths, and the faddishness of both design and its execution. Slade's rendering of Le Corbusier/The Raven's pristine-city absurdity made me laugh out loud, and that's all anyone trying to find humor in this business could ask for.

MIKE SWEENEY
Design-product Systems
Somerville, Massachusetts

"Transforming the Lost Half-Mile" describes the dramatic physical changes to the former industrial wasteland between the Green Line viaduct and the Zakim Bridge, which serve as elegant bookends to the promising new riverfront area. This last stretch of the Charles River also brings great potential for new urban attractions, for recreation and festivities. The missing link between the Charles River pathways and the Boston Harborwalk is finally being filled in.

What makes North Point Park so special is the location and scale of these new spaces. With four MBTA stops within walking distance, this urban waterfront green space will be easily accessible and will offer large grassy areas and lagoons with pedestrian bridges ideal for kayaking and strolling. The large building that Education First is planning will provide 4,400 square feet of restaurant space on two levels with a waterfront patio, right next to the skate park the Charles River Conservancy (CRC) is building.

This 28,000-square-foot skate park facility under the highway ramp, with bowls and streetscape features, was designed by Grindline with input from 400 local skaters. The CRC has raised $2.5 million for what will be a great amenity for athletes as well as spectators. Given its location under the ramps, the skate park will convert an area that might otherwise be an underused highway liability into an active and attractive civic asset.

The state's metropolitan park planners as well as the City of Cambridge and the New

Basin Citizen Advisory Committee, who have worked decades on this rejuvenation, deserve our gratitude for their vision and perseverance.

RENATA VON TSCHARNER
Charles River Conservancy
Cambridge, Massachusetts

The recent "Change" issue was a thoughtful exploration of Boston/Cambridge as an innovation center attracting the best and the brightest—a reputation we will no doubt keep as long as our universities continue spinning off new technology and start-ups, and our hospitals make us the headquarters for cutting-edge healthcare.

But a corollary issue is how we not only attract but *retain* young talent for the future. The best and brightest often come here to go to school. They often begin their entrepreneurial careers and start-ups here. And then we lose them to Silicon Valley and New York City. Why?

We need to examine our barriers to entry and retention. Affordability of housing, reliability of transit, and quality of schools are all critical factors. More important, characteristics that some of us extol as tradition, younger people consider stodgy. We have a social and professional seniority system that often takes too long for younger, more impatient talent to penetrate. New York and Silicon Valley seem more open to interesting new ideas.

Boston is a great city. We are educating more young people. We are cultivating more talent and prospects for innovation. But are we able to keep them and grow them here? If innovation and change are critical to our future, we need a further conversation about how to keep from being a talent exporter.

GEORGE BACHRACH
Environmental League of Massachusetts
Boston

The Spring "Change" issue of *ArchitectureBoston* was one of the first in a long while I read cover to cover. I praise the guest editorial committee for focusing on the changing environment of our city and the players who are guiding their respective industries. My assumption is that the intent was to spur the design community to follow suit, yet the opportunity to drive home this parallel in the "Wide Open" panel discussion left me disheartened and wanting more. I appreciate the issues the panel addressed: re-establishing the architect's role in the longevity of the building, creating and using collaborative environments, and being entrepreneurial in pursuit of passion projects. Although many of us may be on the verge of abandoning good mother architecture, this group attempts to maintain their focus within the profession and the lofty dreams of steering it toward greener pastures—to a place where the role of the architect is no longer marginalized and the balance between quality building and sacrifice is harmoniously rectified. This is commendable.

Yet the conversation's conclusion that we should "Just do stuff" only strengthens the stereotype of Boston designers lagging behind the entrepreneurial endeavors in other fields and other cities. It is obvious that we should be "doing"; should we not hear from and discuss those who are? Is this panel really the appropriate cross-section for an entrepreneurial design culture in our city? If the goal of the DIY youth is to do, we need to hear from those who are doing and learn how to do, rather than debating what should or could be done.

JONATHAN HANAHAN
over,under
Boston

We want to hear from you. Letters may be e-mailed to letters@architectureboston.com or sent to *ArchitectureBoston*, 290 Congress Street, Suite 200, Boston, MA 02110. Letters may be edited for clarity and length, and must include your name, address, and daytime telephone number. Length should not exceed 300 words.

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Contributors



Lloyd **Schwartz**

("Boston Symphony Hall," page 28)

Lloyd Schwartz is a Pulitzer Prize–winning classical music critic and published poet. He is a professor of English at the University of Massachusetts/Boston, classical music editor of *The Boston Phoenix*, and a regular commentator for NPR's *Fresh Air*. His writings have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic*, and *The Best American Poetry*. His most recent book of poems is *Cairo Traffic* (University of Chicago Press).



PHOTO: Sarah Putnam

Deborah **Weisgall**

("Calderwood Hall," page 29)

Deborah Weisgall has written for *The New York Times*, *The Atlantic*, *Esquire*, and *The New Yorker*; she has also published two novels and a memoir about her father, the composer Hugo Weisgall. Her most recent article for *ArchitectureBoston* was "Arts & Minds: Profiles in the Creative Economy" in the Fall 2009 issue.



PHOTO: Conor MacDonald



PHOTO: Conor MacDonald

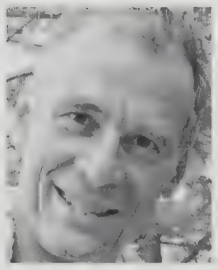
Mollica **Manandhar** AIA | Paula **Buick**

("Hospital, Heal Thyself," page 34)

Mollica Manandhar AIA (left) is an associate at Payette, where she has worked on multiple healthcare, research, and academic buildings. **Paula Buick** (right) is director of the Post Traumatic Stress Innovations project at MIT and former director of healthcare planning at Payette.



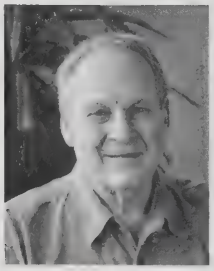
PHOTO: Conor MacDonald



Timothy **Foulkes** | David **Butler**

("Bring On Da Noise!" page 38)

Timothy Foulkes (left) is a principal consultant with Cavanaugh Tocci Associates. He consults with architects, engineers, and property managers on issues of noise and vibration control, including in theaters, auditoriums, office buildings, and courtrooms. **David Butler** (right) is a staff artist at *The Boston Globe*.





Lewis **Spratlan** | Frederick **Peters**

("Conversation," page 48)

Lewis Spratlan (left) won the 2000 Pulitzer Prize in music for his opera *Life is a Dream*. He has won awards and grants from the Guggenheim Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. He has conducted at Tanglewood, the Yale Summer School of Music and Art, and Amherst College, where he was on the faculty until his retirement in 2006. **Frederick Peters** (right), a lapsed composer, is the board chair of New Music USA, the organization formed in late 2011 from the merger of Meet The Composer and the American Music Center.

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Gretchen Schneider AIA is the executive director of the Community Design Resource Center of Boston and the deputy editor of *ArchitectureBoston*.

ABOVE
Rendering of Studio Gang Architects' *Garden in the Machine* project for Cicero, Illinois—one of the five sites of *Foreclosed*. Image courtesy Studio Gang Architects.

Foreclosed: Rehousing the American Dream

Museum of Modern Art
New York City
February 15–August 13, 2012

The problem is the architecture. I'll explain.

In the summer of 2011, MoMA, inspired by the recent housing crisis, invited five interdisciplinary design teams to develop housing proposals for five inner-ring suburbs across the United States. After a series of public workshops and discussions, the five proposals came into the gallery.

Foreclosed is the second in an exhibition series that asks leading architects and related others to invent solutions to pressing contemporary issues. The previous show, *Rising Currents*, included an air of urgency and fresh thinking as it addressed New York City's projected sea-level rise. Ignore the architecture, and *Foreclosed* travels well-trodden ground: Increase density, provide a mix of housing sizes and types, and shrink the distance between work and home. Mixed use, as always, reigns supreme, albeit now with a community composting twist. The designs aim to provide a variety of housing opportunities for Americans at any point along the income/immigrant/household-size ladder. But when has that not been the demand of American housing?

Therein lies the problem. Since cities began to rapidly expand more than a century ago, urban thinkers have proposed transit-oriented, neighborhood-based development as the antidote, packaged in architectural wrapping appropriate to innovative thinking of the time. Obviously, we're missing something. The strongest piece on this exhibit wall is a deceptively simple ad campaign. The actual buildings of *Foreclosed* range from whimsical to indecipherable; a few might be at home in Manhattan or downtown Chicago, but none would be adopted by a suburban developer today. While we lament the lack of popular design sophistication, visitors flock to the model with blinking lights and tiny people, and miss the more important underlying ideas. We architects are left talking with ourselves, once again.

Lucy M. Maulsby is an assistant professor of architectural history at Northeastern University.

RIGHT
The Modern Poster/ Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, by William H. Bradley. Published by Charles Scribner's Sons, 1895. relief process, printed in color. Photograph © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

The Allure of Japan

Museum of Fine Arts
Boston
March 24–December 31, 2012

The American fascination with Japan, ignited by the 1854 opening of trade relations between the two nations, was further cultivated by the availability of goods from the East in specialty shops, reproductions of Japanese buildings at World's Fairs, and Japanese objects displayed in exhibitions, including an influential display at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

The Allure of Japan brings together a range of these objects—brightly colored advertising posters, finely wrought black and white etchings, roughly detailed woodblock prints, and luminous watercolors—from the MFA's collection to illustrate the enormous influence Japanese visual traditions had on artistic practice in America at the dawn of the 20th century. Carefully grouped works succinctly communicate how elements drawn from traditional Japanese art, such as decorative patterns, sensuous curves, flat stylized planes, bold contrast, and subject matter, influenced American art.

In this cross-cultural exchange, which included artists like George Mann Niedecken—best known for his collaborative work with architect Frank Lloyd Wright—lay the seeds of Modernism.



Considered: Designed, Built

Mud, sticks, steel: the essential building blocks of construction. These photos highlight projects from the 2011–12 academic year in which students took design concepts all the way through to execution. As they grappled with the realities of budgets, site, and skill, these students explored the possibilities of a particular material, temporarily transformed a public place, or inventively served a need.

For additional photos, more projects, and full project credits, visit: www.architectureboston.com











CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

Horizon
Wentworth Institute of Technology, installed at Atlantic Wharf, Boston, winter 2012, led by Robert Trumbour AIA, WIT faculty, photo by Chad Carr, primary materials: wood, metal pipe

Epicenter Canopy
Massachusetts College of Art and Design, installed at the Epicenter, Boston, fall 2011, client: Artists for Humanity, led by Sam Batchelor AIA, MassArt faculty, photo by Sam Batchelor AIA, primary materials: acrylic panels, steel

MudWorks
Harvard Graduate School of Design, installed on Quincy Street, Cambridge, spring 2012, led by Anna Heringer, 2012 GSD Loeb Fellow, photo by Iwan Baan, primary material: rammed earth

Ahead: Far Out



RIGHT
Compound, by Sopheap Pich (Singapore, 2011), to be installed as part of *Invisible Cities*. *Invisible Cities* also includes major new commissions. Courtesy MassMoCA.

A trio of trippy summer exhibitions promises to challenge your view. Inspired by Italo Calvino's book of the same name, *Invisible Cities* invites 10 different artists for interpretations of urban landscapes, real and imagined. Meanwhile, also at MassMoCA, Michael Oatman's large, habitable installation offers an intriguing counterpoint: a crash-landed "satellite," a "library," and a field of solar panels to explore as one muses on the fate of utopian dreams. Perhaps born of a similar spirit, Tomás Saraceno's partially transparent, partially reflective construction on the roof of the Met sets up a very different perspective of this real city. Far out, dude.

Invisible Cities
MASS MoCA, North Adams
April 14, 2012–March 1, 2013

All Utopias Fell
Michael Oatman
MASS MoCA, North Adams
April 14–November 4, 2012

Cloud City
Tomás Saraceno
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City
May 15–November 4, 2012



Focus: Occupy Posters

Jesse Haley, Occupy Boston

The tents are down, the plazas are swept. How do you make an intensely place-based movement live on when the places change or get left behind? To that end, Occuprint collects and publishes posters from Occupiers worldwide, aiming to make the ongoing Occupy movement "more visible in physical spaces, not just virtual ones." Many designs riff on the essential characteristics of a city, humorously quote other regime-changing events, and echo the legendary graphics of an earlier age.

See an online slideshow of selected Occupy posters at www.architectureboston.com

For more on Occuprint, or to submit your own poster, see: www.occuprint.org

For more on Jesse Haley, see: www.southendtextiles.com





Covering the Issues

Gretchen Schneider AIA is the executive director of the Community Design Resource Center of Boston and the deputy editor of *ArchitectureBoston*

Home Alone... Have you been wondering why so many small apartments are planned for the Seaport District? Today, twice as many American adults live alone as a half-century ago, and that number's growing, writes Eric Klinenberg in "The Solo Economy" (***Fortune***, February 6, 2012). According to the latest census, 38 percent of Boston households have just one occupant. And contrary to the views of some cultural critics, Klinenberg argues that most solo dwellers do so by choice, and are happy and socially active. They also spend more money than their married counterparts. Home-improvement retailers, developers, and urban planners are taking note.

Sticks, not stones..."Can wooden skyscrapers transform concrete jungles?" asks ***CNN.com*** (posted March 15, 2012). Vancouver, Norway, and Austria all have such towers proposed, the tallest at 20 stories. Proponents promote the environmental benefits of wood—producing concrete and steel requires tremendous amounts of energy, after all—and argue that heavy timber is actually quite resistant to fire. One architect-advocate declares that now is wood's "Eiffel Tower moment"—the time to demonstrate wood's possibility. The online comments make clear that the public remains far from convinced. But then again, the Eiffel Tower once seemed radical, too.

Water, water everywhere... "Venice Sinking More Than Previously Thought," reports Rossella Lorenzi for ***DiscoveryNews*** (posted March 26, 2012). New satellite data shows that as the city continues to sink, it is slowly tilting, too. This means that in this, the world's most famous urban sea-level laboratory, sidewalks will flood more frequently, the flood-protection gates (due to open in 2014) will operate more than originally anticipated, and that ideas for pumping water back into the city subsoil should be developed now. Meanwhile, ***The Atlantic Cities*** reporter John Metcalfe presents new aquatic models for urban areas closer to home, in "Mapping How the Seas Will Eat Coastal US Cities" (posted March 15, 2012). Southeast Florida; Washington, DC; New York City; and Boston face the greatest risk. The maps are interactive: plug in your ZIP code and see your fate. With a predicted seven-foot rise above high tide, 2060 Boston looks a lot like its colonial predecessor.

Back to School... In an unusual move, ***Design Observer*** has republished a press release. "NYC Design Schools: Catalysts for Economic Growth?" (posted March 18, 2012) promotes a report by the Manhattan-based think tank, Center for an Urban Future. The report notes that New York has twice as many design and architecture graduates as any other US city; that the number of design students is rising faster than other disciplines; and that these graduates are more likely than their peers to stay in New York and start their own businesses. Statistics can be misleading—"design" is very broadly defined, and even the report admits that Boston and Cambridge still have more architecture graduates—but the report's themes bear noting. With the Commonwealth's recent focus on the innovation economy, our design schools' contributions beg similar examination.

Big moves... On the 30th anniversary of its completion, Paul Goldberger pens a short love letter to Maya Lin's Vietnam Veterans Memorial in his first column as the new in-house architecture critic for ***Vanity Fair*** (April 2012). "It's still far and away the greatest memorial of modern times—the most beautiful, the most heart-wrenching, the most subtle, and the most powerful." The most controversial, too. That said, Goldberger seems to be creating a minor stir himself. After 15 years at *The New Yorker*, he's jumped ship. "Is this the end of architectural criticism for *The New Yorker*?" wonders Matt Chaban in the ***New York Observer*** (posted April 2, 2012). Once the literary home to Lewis Mumford, *The New Yorker* helped launch good writing about buildings, cities, and how design affects regular people. If *The New Yorker* no longer supports such commentary, who will?

Ethics of the Urban

Harvard Graduate School of Design
Cambridge, Massachusetts
March 2–3, 2012

Cities are rapidly changing. Harvard's Graduate School of Design (GSD) has turned its attention to this issue with a series of conferences. The first, *Ecological Urbanism* (2009), considered the urban environment within the more comprehensive framework of economic, environmental, and social concerns. The second, *In the Life of Cities* (2011), looked at relationships between physical characteristics of cities and the lives they engender. *Ethics of the Urban* examined ideas of citizenship and civic engagement, memorials and public space, and social and political borders. Although the overall tone was academic, speakers from fields unrelated to design drew people from outside the GSD to discuss topics such as the Occupy movement and the National September 11 Memorial.

The Neighborhoods and Neighborliness panel, for example, brought together sociologists Robert Sampson and Loïc Wacquant with Rahul Mehrotra, chair of the GSD's Department of Urban Planning and Design, to discuss relationships between civic engagement, social structures, and place-making. Mehrotra's illustrations of projects from India, where he maintains an active architecture and urban design practice, balanced the more theoretical aspects of the discussion with concrete examples. *Artist Village*, an innovative mixed-income housing development designed by Charles Correa, incorporates traditional building styles such as low-rise housing units clustered around shared courtyards that host family and community celebrations, and construction methods that allow owners to modify the units over time. The *Community Toilets* project, designed by Mehrotra's firm for an Indian NGO, addresses the practical need for infrastructure in informal settlements and slums. It introduces solar panels as well as housing for a caretaker and responds to community concerns about safety. Both projects demonstrate how design of the built environment can improve the degree and quality of social interaction, increase equity, and create long-lasting community change.

The GSD's attention to the urban, consideration of cultural and social issues, and interest in engaging a diversity of participants is both refreshing and promising. New additions to the faculty, such as panel moderators Neil Brenner and Diane Davis, further demonstrate the school's commitment to expanding its educational curriculum to include the social dimensions of design. The more that academic institutions such as the GSD engage practitioners, other disciplines, and the community in conversations about the relationship of design and cultural values, the better they will prepare graduates to influence the cities of the future.

Anne-Marie Lubenau AIA is a 2011–12 Loeb Fellow at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. She led the Community Design Center of Pittsburgh for 10 years, and in June 2012, she will become the director of the Rudy Bruner Award.



SOUNDS OF THE CITY

From car horns to bird song, the city performs.

Some people walk the city streets and hear a literal symphony: Think of John Cage recording the traffic noise on Sixth Avenue. Most of us absorb the city's melodies unconsciously. Researchers in England have identified the urban sounds we like most: car tires on wet pavement; the rumble of an underground train; the thump of bass spilling out of a jazz club. Other sounds are less favored. But every sound in a city has a purpose, and that is a kind of beauty. Too much manipulation is just Muzak.

HONK!



Take back the site

by Maury Martin

Maury Martin is a saxophonist and cyclist with a family medical practice in Somerville and a cofounder of the HONK! Festival.

On Columbus Day weekend in Davis Square, Somerville, most of the honking to be heard is not that of motor vehicles but the sound of 30 brass bands performing in the annual HONK! Festival. In 1996, five members of our Somerville-based Second Line Social Aid and Pleasure Society Brass Band joined up with other like-minded bands from New York and Chicago, hoping to offer an alternative to our car-centered culture in a busy city square.

Although the bands vary widely in style and mission, we share the goal of using outdoor public space not simply as a passageway from one location to another, but as an organic stage, removing the barrier between performer and listener.

The theme of the festival parade is "Reclaim the Streets for Bikes, Horns, and Feet." We believe public outdoor space should be used for music, art, and protest. Some bands have a primarily political focus, playing in support of activist causes and demonstrations for social change. Others see the act of unpredictable musical performance as a political statement in itself at a time when residents are so often cut off from the sounds of the city with iPods or acoustically sealed in their automobiles.

We are fortunate to have Davis Square as a home for our event. It has several parks, plazas, and protected spaces where bands can play simultaneously without their music overlapping or shutting down the business of the square. During the festival, a different band plays each hour at seven sites in the square. The celebration has expanded to include a parade down Massachusetts Avenue to Harvard Square, and a nighttime boat cruise on Boston Harbor.

We hoped the idea would appeal to musicians and spectators, but we certainly did not expect the revolutionary street spectacle of never-before-seen proportions that evolved. It turned out this is a movement that is far more widespread than we imagined; bands have come from as far away as Rome to be a part of the festival, and sister festivals have sprung up in Austin, Texas; Montreal; and Seattle.

Few sights are more satisfying to a street musician than seeing the shock, amazement, and then—with luck—the smile from a traveler emerging from the subway station to find a 20-piece brass band playing a New Orleans parade tune. The city provides the soundstage that makes this possible.



BANG!

The streets have ears

by Michael Jonas

Michael Jonas is executive editor of *CommonWealth* magazine and a longtime Dorchester resident.

In any noisy urban setting, "there are a lot of things that go bump," says Boston police officer Matthew Hogardt. His concern is whether that bump is a gunshot—an unfortunate reality in the soundtrack of the city.

Hogardt's job is made considerably easier by ShotSpotter, a sound-detection system the police department deployed five years ago. It can distinguish gunfire from firecrackers, vehicle backfires, and other noises of the night, and pinpoint its location to within several feet. With about 120 sensors spread across a 6.2-square-mile swath of Boston where gunfire is most common—sections of Mattapan, Roxbury, Dorchester, Jamaica Plain, and the South End—the ShotSpotter system can alert police dispatchers within two seconds to the location and likely cause of a "detectable incident."

Hogardt, who helps oversee the system at police headquarters, says it means police cars are dispatched more quickly to the scene of gunfire, which can lead to faster emergency medical help for victims. The system's unquestioned benefit comes in the 20 percent of all shootings for which the department never receives a 911 call. ShotSpotter is also indispensable for steering police to the location of shell casings and other ballistic evidence.

The system, developed by the California-based company SST Inc., works much the same as satellite GPS technology: At least three sensors must detect possible gunfire for the system to "triangulate" the location. But though it relies on very precise algorithms, ShotSpotter must also deal with the very imprecise vagaries of place.

Boston, in fact, is one of the most challenging of the 64 cities where the system is in use, says James Beldock, senior vice president for products and business development at ShotSpotter. Boston's concentration of brick buildings, especially in Roxbury and the South End, as well as the much greater density of buildings overall, give it "very low acoustic propagation," says Beldock. In other words, sounds are more muted here. "The sound propagation characteristics of Boston are dramatically different" than most US cities, he says. "The gunshot is the same; what's changed is the sound that gun makes when it travels through the architectural environment."

Some Boston neighborhoods pose particular complications. "There are a lot of valleys in the South End, speaking acoustically," says Hogardt. With its grid of contiguous Victorian row houses—the largest such neighborhood in the country—a sound that travels loudly down one of the South End's main thoroughfares might not register around the corner on its narrower cross streets. To make up for the city's diminished "sound propagation," the ShotSpotter company has added 15 to 20 percent more sensors than in its standard deployment, and 50 percent more than cities with the best sound propagation. Perhaps not coincidentally, San Francisco, often paired with Boston as one of the country's most livable, walkable cities, is the only other city using ShotSpotter that has such low sound propagation, says Beldock.

Long known for the taciturn disposition of its citizenry, Boston turns out to be similarly reserved when it comes to relaying all the sounds of the city.

Why ringtones are social turnoffs

by Richard Garver

Ringing cell phones and cell phone conversations in public places provoke almost universal annoyance, sometimes even rage. We think of them as rude, intrusive, the privatizing of public space. But why? At a rational level, a conversation on a cell phone conducted by a person sitting next to us in a restaurant is no different from the same conversation carried on face to face. But we don't experience them in the same way at all.

The reason may lie in the revelations of contemporary psychologists such as Daniel Kahneman, author of the best-selling *Thinking, Fast and Slow*. He has demonstrated that our minds function in two distinct modes: one unconscious and intuitive; the other conscious and rational. Our intuitive system unconsciously guides us through routine social encounters by taking in the expressions, tones of voice, appearances and activities of those in our vicinity; associating these perceptions with stored images and experiences; and making guesses about the interactions to come. Simultaneously, we unconsciously emit our own facial expressions, body language, and voices that communicate our social identities and intentions.

When we detect uncomfortable or risky situations or sense attractive opportunities, however, we replace this effortless process with a more taxing one of deliberate, rational calculation.

A cell phone conversation puts us in tension. Although our rational system can't produce a convincing objection, our intuitive system is offended that the person on the phone, tuned to a virtual space we can't enter, has opted out of the one we share. On the sidewalk, these people don't read the messages our eyes and bodies unconsciously send about whether we intend to pass to the left or right, because they have directed their social signal receptors elsewhere.

Our pique increases when the voices are louder and perhaps have a different timbre than others around us, because the volume shows us they are not tuned to our shared surroundings but to a virtual connection instead. In short, the annoyance cell phone conversations create does not result from a lack of courtesy—a concept situated in our rational mind—but from the perception that the person on the phone has put himself beyond the mental processes through which we expect to navigate social space.

Perhaps when Kahneman's concept of our two distinct operating systems is more widely shared, custodians of shared spaces, such as restaurants or railroad cars, will be better prepared to decide whether to treat cell phone conversations as within our rights—a construct from our rational system—or as behavior that offends our unconscious mind.

Richard Garver, who was a senior official at the Boston Redevelopment Authority for more than three decades, is currently pursuing projects concerned with the area's history.



SHHHH!

Murmur and hum

by William Rawn FAIA and Clifford Gayley AIA

William Rawn FAIA and **Clifford Gayley** AIA are design principals at William Rawn Associates, architects of the new Cambridge Public Library.

When Susan Flannery, the director of the Cambridge Public Library, hired our team for the new library, she said clearly and forcefully: "This building should first and foremost be about the book." Susan knows full well that the book is evolving in our digital age, but she wanted to be certain the building was committed to the opportunities that are enhanced by increased access to all forms of information.

At the same time, Susan expressed the hope that a library could also serve as a town common, that place where the whole city comes together to celebrate its civic spirit. That can most effectively happen in the atmosphere of the book, particularly in a diverse and highly motivated city such as Cambridge.

For our team, this is an inspiring view of a library, at a social level, a civic level. But as a place of study and concentration, that goal naturally raises questions of noise: of the power of sound and whether it leads to distraction. Susan was adamant that the new library not be a place characterized by the stern admonition "Hush!" so often associated with libraries, but a place that welcomes the sounds of an engaged community. For a civic space, the sound of murmur can be welcoming, suggesting a sense of joy coming from the connections of community.

This question of sound influenced our design of the Cambridge Public Library at many levels: the organization of the building as a whole; the organization of each of its three main floors; even specific spatial adjacencies. Although the question of noise in a library is a broad one, its complexity can be captured in a comparison of this library's two very different reading rooms.

The new reading room is placed near all the comings and goings of the entry, along the south-facing "double-skin curtain wall" with its celebration of sustainability and its close connection to the park outside. Between 1,600 and 2,000 patrons visit the library each day; it is naturally a place of activity. Chairs move closer to or farther from the window; people multitask with book, computer, and yes, food; people greet one another. It has become a destination in the city where all generations intermingle, even the twenty-somethings, a notoriously elusive patron group for libraries. It is not particularly quiet; it is a place with a murmur.

At the same time, the new library connects to the original 1889 Van Brunt building with its more formal reading room, fully restored to its original grandeur by Ann Beha Architects. A tall room with very tall shelves and small clerestory windows, the restored reading room is marked by dark wood, big tables, and even an apse at one end. It has become, by its own volition, the Very Quiet Reading Room. There are no signs about noise, no reminders from the librarian. The citizenry simply have chosen to make it a quiet place, a place of self-regulated hush, only steps from the very active, noise-filled teen room.

This is as it should be. A building of the book. A building that is town common. That place of rubbing shoulders, of visual *and* verbal interaction—all done at a controlled decibel level but certainly not in absolute quiet. In Cambridge, that has been achieved with a minimum of fuss, by the natural evolution of the space.

Heaven and nature sing

by Jay Wickersham FAIA

A May morning in Mount Auburn Cemetery. I'm sidling between the tombstones, eyes aloft, binoculars ready, scanning a tree's branches, trying to locate the quick, restless motions of a 4-inch-long bird whose song I've just heard.

Of all the birds that can be seen in Mount Auburn during the spring migration—thrushes and orioles, owls and woodpeckers, herons and hummingbirds—the most beautiful, and the most maddening, are the tiny warblers. There are more than 30 different kinds of warblers in New England, and their names indicate the vividness and variety of their plumage: Cerulean, Chestnut-sided, Yellow-rumped, Black-throated Green, Redstart.

But much of bird watching is actually bird listening; and not many warblers possess melodious, easily remembered songs. As the British ornithologist James Fisher wrote: "Few of them really warble; their sounds buzz and tinkle, slur and twitter, stutter and trill." To make it worse, the peak of the warbler migration hits just as the trees are leafing out, so you rarely get a long, unobstructed view of the bird you're trying to identify, to match up its appearance with its song.

What's a bird watcher to do? I used to have a recording that accompanied Roger Tory Peterson's field guide. Early in our marriage, my wife woke up one morning with the hazy impression that birds had somehow gotten into our house overnight. She came downstairs to find our cat stalking the stereo speakers, while I listened solemnly to the difference between the songs of the Blue-winged and Golden-winged Warblers.

Now, instead of recordings, I've gone back to the mnemonic phrases taught to me by my bird watching grandmother when I was eight years old. Laugh if you want, but I still find it useful to believe that the Yellow Warbler sings "Sweet, sweet, sweet, yessirree!" that the Black-throated Green drawls "Trees, trees, murmuring trees," and that the Chestnut-sided confidently announces "I wish to see Miss Beecher."

Why do warblers and other birds sing during migration, anyway? After 40 years of bird watching, it wasn't until I started writing this essay that I asked the question.

Scientists have found that once male warblers arrive on their breeding grounds, they sing two different versions of their songs. Courtship brings out the full-blown, "operatic" rendition to attract a female with whom they will form a monogamous bond (though one that lasts only a single breeding season). And then there's a property-rights version of the song, used to mark territory and warn off other males, who might try to steal food intended for their young or have the hots for their mates.

But on migration in Mount Auburn, where few of them stop to breed, the male warblers are still bachelors—irresponsible and property-less. They sing, it appears, as a kind of rehearsal. They're singing in the shower, singing for the hell of it.

I'm glad. The life of a warbler is very short, two or three years—as short as the lives of so many 19th-century infants, whose pathetic little headstones sprinkle the lawns of Mount Auburn. Let them sing.

Jay Wickersham FAIA is a partner in the Cambridge, Massachusetts, law firm Noble & Wickersham. He teaches courses in the history and ethics of architectural practice at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. He is an avid birder.




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Boston Symphony Hall

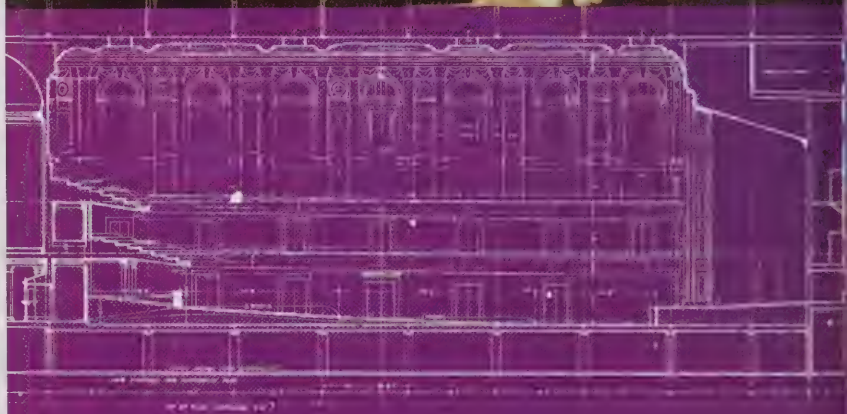
The birth of architectural acoustics

by Lloyd Schwartz

I've been a music critic in Boston for 36 years and wouldn't have it any other way. There may be more going on in New York; Los Angeles may have more glamour; Cleveland and Chicago have symphony orchestras of comparable quality to the Boston Symphony Orchestra; and San Francisco and even Houston have more opera. Still, I wouldn't have it any other way. Partly because there are so many dedicated Boston musicians who play on such a consistently high level but also because at least three of Boston's major concert venues make music such a pleasure to hear, and one of them—Symphony Hall—is widely regarded as one of the great concert halls in the world.

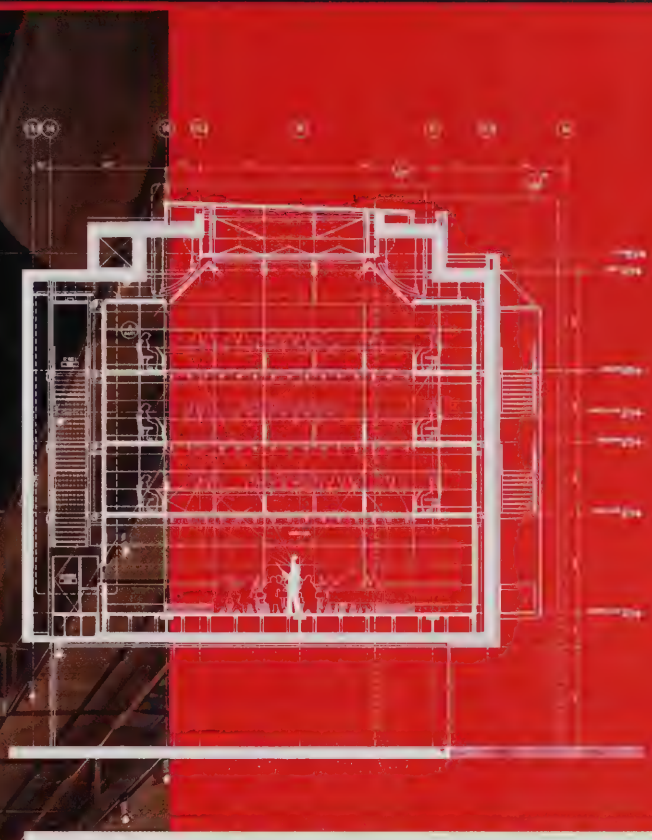
Acoustics is a mysterious science; maybe more mystery than science. One of our best concert halls, the midsized Jordan Hall at the New England Conservatory, underwent an expensive restoration

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30



ABOVE
An early view of the interior of the Symphony Hall auditorium taken before all the statues were arranged in the niches and showing an empty hall with orchestra risers arranged on the stage. Courtesy the Boston Symphony Orchestra Archives.





ABOVE
A stage-level view of Calderwood Hall. Photography © Nic Lehoux/Renzo Piano Building Workshop.

Calderwood Hall

A room that's tuned like a piano

by Deborah Weisgall

When I was much younger and much smaller, my favorite place to listen to music was under the piano while my father was playing. Beneath the long triangular box, in the shelter of the instrument's gold metal undercarriage, sound turned physical. It vibrated in my ears and teeth and bones: thundering bass, the mellow notes of those octaves above and below middle C within the range of the voice, sweet softs and terrifying louds. Bach, Beethoven, Schubert, Britten, Berg: I *felt* that music.

Calderwood Hall, the magical new concert space that is part of Renzo Piano's addition to the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, comes close to replicating that intimacy. The room, which holds only 300 people, looks like the inside of a piano, with its walls of laser-cut oak, its exposed metal fittings, and its seats upholstered in the red of a piano's felts. During

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32

and cleaning in 1995, and although great care was taken not to change anything acoustically, the immediate results were disastrous. The warm, intimate sound was suddenly too bright and too hot. Brasses on the stage sounded as if they were coming from behind the audience. Every turn of a page in anyone's program book could be heard loud and clear. My joke was that I thought that the Conservatory had paid to have the notorious cement slab that had been discovered under the stage at Carnegie Hall imported to Boston.

What went wrong when there were so few changes besides new seats and fresh paint? The cause may have been the paint itself. Not as porous as the original paint on the rear walls, the new paint may have created an intractably hard surface that reflected sound without absorbing any. Within a year, the rear walls were covered with white felt, and suddenly Jordan Hall sounded more like its beautiful old self.

Sabine's "Magic Formula"

$$RT60 = 0.161V/Sa$$

Where RT60 is the time it takes for the sound level to decay by 60 decibels after it has stopped, V is the volume of the room, S is the absorbing surface area and a is the normalized acoustic absorbency of the room's surfaces (0 is a perfect reflector; 1, a perfect absorber).

Opening night, in July 1994, at the elegant new Seiji Ozawa Hall at Tanglewood, there was another acoustical mishap, though one of the world's most distinguished acousticians, Lawrence Kirkegaard, had supervised. Yo-Yo Ma was playing the world premiere of the John Williams *Cello Concerto*. But you could barely hear the cello! That hall had an array of movable ceiling baffles, and it took a season to figure out how to use them optimally. Again, the stage wall was covered with felt (this time red). And since then, the sound has been more than satisfactory for an open-air venue.

But Symphony Hall is another story. In this temple of art, with its traditional "shoebox" shape, its coffered ceiling and faux columns, its niches with 16 plaster casts of classical sculptures—does every fig leaf help deflect and disperse the sound?—its latticed and velvet-covered balcony railing, its wooden floors and leather seats, and its 4,800-pipe Aeolian-Skinner organ (installed in 1949 and recently restored), the sound is magical, warm, and vibrant. You can clearly hear the softest pianissimo, the most delicate pizzicato. And its current superb brass section, which for years seemed coarse and blaring, has acquired a new burnished depth along with its familiar power. Everything blooms! Everything *sounds*!

A conductor like Seiji Ozawa, who wanted the sections to blend into a rich undifferentiated tapestry, could get the orchestra to produce that blend. Other conductors, such as Pierre Boulez or James Levine, who like to bring out more contrast between instrumental sections and individual instruments, giving the variegated colors of the instruments more dimensionality and direction, could do that, too.

One of the innovations for which I especially admired Levine was his decision to go back to an 18th- and 19th-century seating plan, dividing the first and second violin sections antiphonally, on opposite sides of the stage, rather than keeping both sections together, which makes their differences (question and answer, call and response: true stereo) essentially inaudible. This seating plan added a new (old) spaciousness to the sonic textures. I now miss it when guest conductors revert to the previous plan, which is easier to conduct.

Symphony Hall opened on October 15, 1900. Its architects were the distinguished firm of McKim, Mead, and White, who invited a young Harvard physics professor, Wallace Clement Sabine, possibly because of some calculations he had done for Harvard's Fogg Museum, to advise them about acoustics. His advice is now considered the first truly "scientific" approach to concert-hall acoustics: the "birth of architectural acoustics."

Sabine seemed to have figured out what acoustician Robert Berens (who worked on the recent refurbishment of Symphony Hall) calls the "magic formula" for the effective absorption and reverberation of sound: neither too dry (for lack of reverberation) nor too echoey. As he explained it to me, the sound produced on the stage not only goes directly into the hall but also bounces off everything in sight and earshot—side and rear walls and ceiling—at minutely different times. That combination—the magic formula for absorption and reverberation—is what creates the overall hearing experience. And since Symphony Hall was one of the first major buildings to be fireproofed, Berens added, the brick and masonry reflect a lot of bass better than a frame building would.

But despite its consistent acoustical qualities, Symphony Hall doesn't have a single monolithic sound. The experience of the music can actually be quite different in different parts of the hall. There are people who wouldn't sit anywhere but in the back of the second balcony or close to the proscenium in the first balcony or in row W on the floor. I first started going to the BSO as the guest of an elderly friend whose longtime subscription was in Row B of the second balcony, just left of center. I was enthralled. The orchestra looked a mile away, and yet I felt swaddled by the sound. Nothing on my hi-fi ever sounded as voluptuous or brilliant.

When I first started reviewing, my press tickets were

in Row M, just off the right-center aisle. I could locate where every sound was coming from, but I also felt that I was hearing more individual instruments than the full ensemble. And I couldn't see who was playing, which made it hard to praise (or criticize) the orchestral soloists.

My choice seats now are on the side of the first balcony, fairly close to the stage. I can see who's playing, and the sound of the orchestra seems at its most glorious, as if it's aimed directly at me, without hurting my ears even at the highest volumes. Yet whenever I have a floor seat or a seat in the center of the balcony, I also love the fresh experience.

The only place I would not choose to sit is in the back of the orchestra section, under the overhang of the first balcony. It's not true that there are no bad seats at Symphony Hall. These are the cheap seats that are not worth the price of admission because so much of the sound is cut off. You keep wanting to turn up the volume, but of course there's no dial.

And while Symphony Hall is a magnificent place for an orchestra, it's really too cavernous for chamber music, and some solo singers, even opera stars, can have a hard time being heard over an orchestra. Yet some singers can be electrifying, as when Barbara Cook ends one of her concerts singing without a microphone, and even her slightest whisper fills the hall.

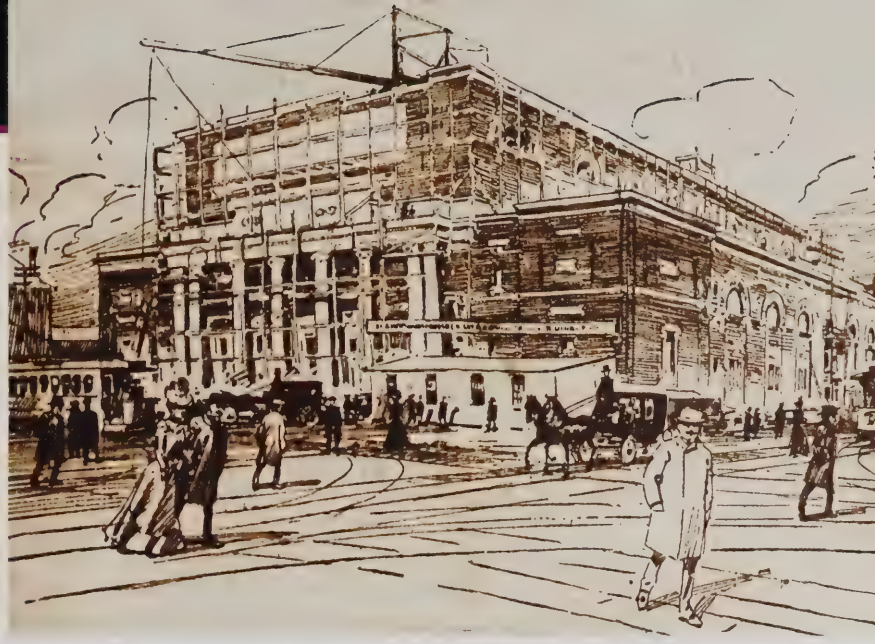
Berens said he did a lot of measuring in acoustical test chambers in the process of replacing the decaying stage floor and the old leather chair cushions with softer new ones; opening the shutters of the hall's 14 semicircular clerestory windows, which had been closed since World War II, now letting in daylight and starlight; and restoring the organ. He regards the changes we can "hear" as not only physical but also psychological. If the hall is visibly brighter, we also seem to hear a brighter sound. But he also acknowledges that with the routine maintenance of the 100-year-old stage floor, there had developed "a gross lack of uniformity. Parts of the floor were loose, parts deteriorating from aging varnish or the spit of brass players. The changes," he says, however minimal, "are going to be perceived primarily by cellists and bassists, whose instruments make direct contact with the wooden floor." And the greater uniformity of response across the floor means fewer "sweet spots."

"The old floor," BSO bassist James Orleans told me, "created a magnificent resonating chamber beneath our instruments, and one felt the floor responding as if it were a part of the aged instrument. Since the new flooring was installed, we do not get the same intensity of feedback from the floor." Orleans says he once suggested collecting, storing, and spot-repairing the aged flooring wood to work into the new floor, rather the way violin makers incorporate old wood to make new instruments more responsive. "Evidently, that idea was not feasible," he says. Orleans agrees with Berens that "the bassists perhaps notice the differences the floor has made more than anyone on the stage. I miss the old floor."

Replacing the old seats also required a lot of testing. Berens's only regret (and I've been noticing this problem, too) is that the half-inch of thicker padding on those hard old seats has resulted in a more precarious "tipping point," so that more empty seats crash down during a performance when the hall is not full. Some minimal padding under the seats might be called for.

The great acoustics can actually be a problem for the musicians themselves. Another BSO player, while admiring the "glowing warmth, the resonance and extraordinary tone the hall produces, both onstage and for the audience," also acknowledged that there was an occasional disadvantage to this very attribute. "Hearing what one's colleagues are playing," this player writes, "can be rather more difficult than in a slightly drier acoustic. One has to be very careful to play at the right time because other players' note-beginnings and -endings are rendered somewhat diffuse. The lack of sharp clarity and immediacy can sometimes hurt ensemble. Naturally, the farther apart the musicians are, the more difficult the problem becomes. Any such doubt might be transformed into a lack of conviction in making an entrance."

Musicians obviously don't play only by looking at the conductor, though a conductor with a clear and decisive beat can help immeasurably. Most musicians will probably agree with my anonymous player that tight ensemble is not the most crucial element in all repertoire. The treasured resonance of the hall masks most of these problems anyway. I haven't heard of a single musician who is ready to trade Symphony Hall for any other concert venue. And there's at least one grateful listener who wouldn't, either. ■



ABOVE
A sketch of the construction of Symphony Hall. Published in *The Boston Herald*, March 1, 1900. Courtesy the Boston Symphony Orchestra Archives.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
For more historic photos, visit: www.architectureboston.com

concerts involving a piano, the Steinway on the floor, its lid removed and its workings exposed, illustrates the resemblance.

It is both elegant and raw. A concrete shell surrounds the wooden hall, much the way the metal casing of a piano supports its strings and soundboard. On the ground floor, two rows of seats surround a floor of unvarnished Alaskan cedar, which rides a foot above the concrete. All that separates the audience from the stage is the darker wood along the perimeter, where the chairs are placed.

Three balconies rise on all four sides of the hall; each holds a single row of seats. In front of the seats glass panels tilt slightly outward to baffle sound, and above them floats a thin wooden railing. Depending on where you sit, you can look down on the hands of a pianist, watch a bow cross a violin's strings, read a flutist's score. And every member of the audience can see almost everybody else.

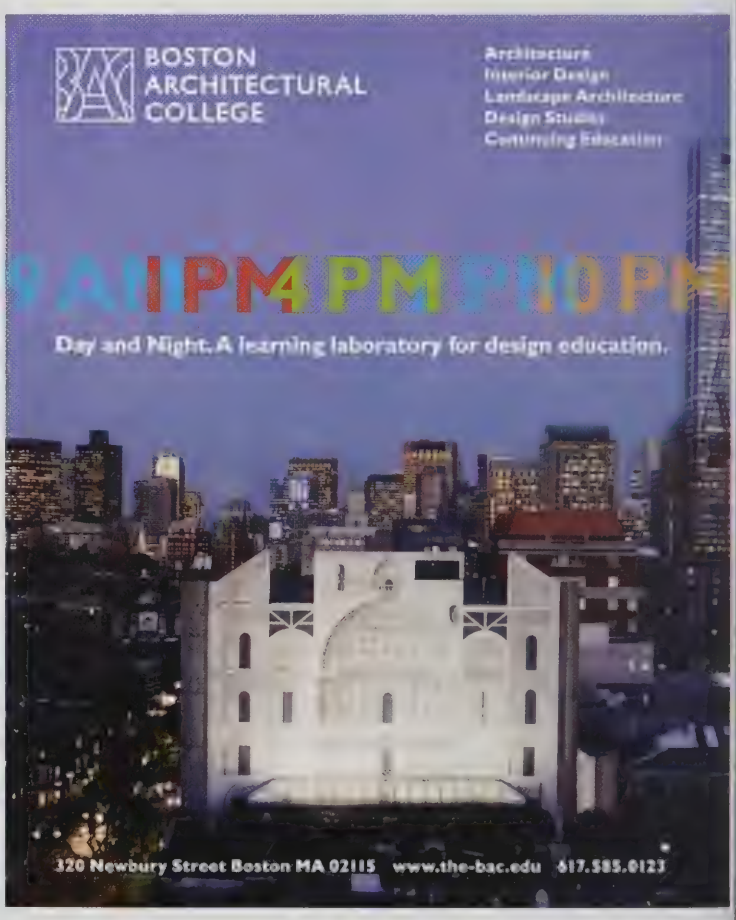
Renzo Piano came up with this design after the museum's director, Anne Hawley, and its music director, Scott Nickrenz, had rejected three earlier, more conventional plans. Hawley gives Piano great credit for "working with the messy process" at the Gardner. Normally, in a project such as this, the architect communicates with one person. But Hawley asked that her staff and some trustees be involved firsthand in the decision-making process. "We rejected plans," she says, "but we never changed what he designed after we accepted one." They never tinkered; they never diluted.

At Nickrenz's urging, Piano worked with Yasuhisa Toyota, who had designed the acoustics for Frank Gehry's Walt Disney Hall in Los Angeles and the New World Center in Miami. Nickrenz wanted the hall to function like an 18th-century horseshoe-shaped theater, which, he says, allows the audience "to share in the performance." And he didn't want a stage.

In the beginning of the design process, Piano and Toyota were not entirely conscious of the way the hall echoed the Venetian arcaded courtyard at the heart of the Gardner. "It's never clear in the beginning; in the beginning, it was more about sound," Piano told me. They began to play with those connections, roofing the hall with a skylight like the one that covers the courtyard, turning the courtyard's solid walls into continuous balconies that make the tiers of seats transparent.

This transparency has a psychological aspect, too; it gives the addition a kind of through-the-looking-glass quality. A glass-walled lounge feels like a mid-20th-





century Modernist house, and it's called a living room. As with the original Gardner, the question arises: Is this space public or private? The new structure also erases distinctions between inside and outside. Sometimes it feels precarious. What if your foot slides though one of the steps? What if you fall under the railing from one of the balcony seats and bounce off the piano strings?

Precariousness, of course, is an illusion, but it acts as a prelude, setting the mood for the hall and the music. In this place, only the elemental phenomenon of performing separates musicians from audience. The musicians seem like ordinary people as they walk into the hall from a doorway in the corner, as if they are entering a living room. When they begin to play, they are transformed: They inhabit a heightened world, only 10 feet away from us.

The back leg of the piano stands over one of the floor's supporting beams. The floor vibrates; the room vibrates. "The sound is clear and balanced," says Nicholas Kitchen, the first violinist of the Borromeo Quartet, which took part in acoustic testing and has performed there. "In a concert, you feel it's individuals in the audience you're interacting with, not an undifferentiated mass. It's not what we're accustomed to. It's a wonderful sensation."

And those of us in the audience can hear every nuance, the last whisper of a violin's fading pianissimo, a cellist's anticipatory breath, the harmonics of the piano strings. We can hear the squeak of a performer's rubber-soled shoes, the percussion of a dropped program in the third balcony. "The sound is very direct, and everything is exposed; it's immediate," Toyota said to me. "There is a visual intimacy and an acoustical intimacy."

The clarity of sound makes it difficult to cover mistakes. Because the sound cannot be directional, it's hard to keep a lid on a piano, which means that pianists have to adjust their playing. But every new concert hall takes getting used to. "It is like a musical instrument," Piano says. "You have to tune it. You need time to learn it." Toyota explains: "You need patience. Musicians are different. How do they play? How do they hear? And the audience has to learn, too. This is a unique place."

I've sat on the ground floor and in the balconies, I've been beside the music and over it. Calderwood Hall engages us in that visceral way. We can touch the music here, we can see it, and we are changed. Watching one another, watching the musicians, we become performers, too. At the end of a concert, applause spills over the balconies like a waterfall, flooding the space with our noise. Artists and audience, we are in this together. ■



ABOVE
Calderwood's Steinway piano, with its lid removed. Photography © Nic Lehoux/Renzo Piano Building Workshop

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HOSPITAL, HEAL THYSELF

Clamor is hazardous to your health. Designers have the Rx.

by Mollica Manandhar AIA and Paula Buick



OPPOSITE
A common hospital scene. Photos courtesy Payette.

ABOVE
A quieter approach. At this typical intensive-care patient room on the 6th floor of the new Lunder Building at Massachusetts General Hospital, the architects minimized visual clutter along with aural noise and created calming views. Photo by Frank Oudeman. Architecture by NBBJ.

Imagine bright lights, beeping monitors, crowds of strangers and workers filling the corridors. Now add large equipment on wheeled carts, computer screens everywhere, and the voice of overhead paging speakers. When you complete the picture with the shuffle of partially clothed bodies, today's hospitals are more akin to 24-hour Las Vegas casinos than the home-like spa settings that are conducive to recuperation.

Mix in the pervasive sense of personal vulnerability and drama, and the need to get things done quickly, with no tolerance for error, and the hospital—a place most of us will encounter at some point in our lives—is far from the peaceful environment needed to support healing.

In fact, the clamor impedes recovery: Rising blood pressure, increased respiratory rates, sleep deprivation and anxiety are well documented in adults overexposed to noise. The World Health Organization recommends that noise in hospital rooms shouldn't be above 30 to 40 decibels. (For comparison, the rustling of leaves is 20 decibels, and highway traffic is 75 decibels.) A study published in 2012 by University of Chicago assistant dean Dr. Veneet Arora found that average patient-room noise level was closer to 50 decibels and sometimes spiked to 80. This is like sleeping next to a running dishwasher all night. No wonder standard hospital satisfaction surveys report patients complaining about noise twice as often as about the food.

Architects working in healthcare settings strive to create an ordered, tranquil environment: part meditative chapel and part babbling forest brook. But this essence of calm is far from total silence. Susan E. Mazer, president of the consulting firm Healing Healthcare Systems (and a former jazz harpist), has it right when she describes the need to create an exemplary standard of caring that is "heard as well as seen."

As early as 1859, Florence Nightingale believed that noise delayed healing. In *Notes on Nursing*, Nightingale writes, "Unnecessary noise, then, is the most cruel absence of care which can be inflicted either on sick or well." In 1918, one of the foremost American architects in healthcare design, Edward Fletcher Stevens, called for new technologies to reduce noise; he advocated the removal of "nurse call electric bells" and worried about vacuum cleaner racket. Even Mark Twain was recruited to join The Society for the Suppression of Unnecessary Noise, in an early-20th-century effort to minimize steamboat whistles in the East River as they passed though hospital zones.

The first comprehensive acoustic regulations for hospitals in the modern era appeared in the 2010 edition of *Guidelines for Design and Construction of Health Care Facilities*, published by the nonprofit Facility Guidelines Institute. The institute brought together an interdisciplinary group of architects, engineers, human behaviorists, acousticians, and others to set standards for healing environments. The guidelines cover a wide range of issues, from internal noise isolation of a patient's room to vibration isolation of mechanical equipment to dampening exterior noise impacts on the surrounding community.

The Acoustical Society of America has been vital in developing numerical ratings to measure interior walls, ceilings, floors, doors, windows, and exterior wall configurations. The larger the number the more successful the material is at preventing noise from passing through. Establishing such standards is a step in the right direction. But merely focusing on compliance with a single numerical rating risks losing the potential for more highly informed acoustical design decisions. More important than trying to solve the problem with a number is finding the cause of the problem and addressing it at the source.

The hospital experience is dominated by equipment noise. From the monitor next to the patient's bed to the neighbor's television, from pagers and alarms to mechanical equipment noise, there is no end to the cacophony found in a patient room. Other than the obvious need for regular equipment maintenance, options to keep unwanted noise down could include locating TV speakers close to a patient's bed, using headphones, or providing speakers integrated into pillows.

Hospitals are making progress. To minimize overhead paging, many are now incorporating integrated pagers, texting, and synchronized internal communication among staff. Sound-level monitors at nursing stations also help keep staff aware of their behavior. A device called the "Yacker Tracker" has been installed at Veterans Administration hospitals in

Florida and at Roger Williams Hospital in Providence. It is similar to a stoplight, turning from green to yellow to red to alert people in the vicinity when sound levels reach an uncomfortable level.

Hospitals are also visually cluttered places, requiring designers to keep in mind the important relationship of visual and auditory senses. Providing a view and connection to nature can have a positive effect on the mind. At the recently completed Lunder Building at Massachusetts General Hospital, every patient room and the staff lounges have been designed with calming views. Open gardens of all varieties and sizes, whether on ground level or atop a roof, have the power to heal. At Hershey Medical Center in Pennsylvania, multiple healing gardens provide respite from a busy and noisy clinical environment for patients, family and staff alike.

Even at a distance, patients are more apt to be negatively affected by noise when they can see the corresponding unpleasant source. Like covering your eyes or ears in a scary movie, reducing the number of sensory inputs is calming. Similarly, lowering light levels tends to cause people to tone down their voices. Lighting, then, is an invaluable tool in reducing noise.

Good design is sometimes limited by regulation. Infection control obviously is critical. But as Erica Ryherd, an acoustical specialist at the Georgia Institute of Technology, writes in her 2010 article "Too Noisy to Heal," poor sound environments are a result of reflections from numerous hard surfaces that hospitals favor because they are easy to clean. As a result, noise mitigation solutions mainly have been confined to ceiling materials.

Although infection-control measures must be followed, marquee cancer centers such as Memorial Sloan-Kettering in New York City and MD Anderson in Houston, and community hospitals such as St. Joseph's in Wisconsin are going against norms by using carpet in the hallways of their patient-care spaces. Carpets have meant quieter corridors and greater patient satisfaction. St. Joseph's reports evidence that carpeting reduces staff fatigue as well. The hospitals have also acknowledged the need for higher levels of maintenance for carpeting and have adopted a rigorous program that supports such maintenance.

Another regulatory imperative for sound control is HIPAA—the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act—which establishes national rules





for patient privacy. Hospitals understand that poorly designed acoustical environments can pose a serious threat to confidentiality if private conversations between doctor and patient or among clinical staff can be overheard. Still, privacy should not be the only goal for designers. Human presence perhaps creates some unwanted noise, but it should be weighed against the positive influence of human connection. Sounds of water, music, and other calming sounds from nature have proven to be therapeutic as well.

It is not just patients who are affected by noise. Hospital staffers consistently report exhaustion and burnout due to the continued exposure. *The Boston Globe*'s coverage of "alarm fatigue" found medical errors, delayed care, and even deaths could be attributed to staff becoming desensitized to the constant bleating of alarms. On one 15-bed unit at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, staffers documented an average of 942 alarms per day—about one every 90 seconds.

Some owners are taking charge. A 2011 article in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* described how Memorial Hospital in Belleville, Illinois, adopted the national Silent Hospitals Help Healing, or SHHH, campaign. "The hospital's maintenance staff replaced squeaky wheels, installed noise-absorbing ceiling tiles, and flattened the thresholds at the entrances to patient rooms," the article read. Beyond those structural improvements, Memorial Hospital staff began sending text messages to doctors, reducing noisy overhead paging announcements "from an average of 100 pages per day to only three." A tangible act such as this from the owner's side sends a strong message about the importance of acoustic comfort, and it certainly is a strong booster for both patient and staff satisfaction.

Acoustics in healthcare is a relatively new area of specialization. Merely mitigating noise through sound-absorbing materials is not enough. We need to be thinking actively of hospitals as multicultural, multi-layered environments.

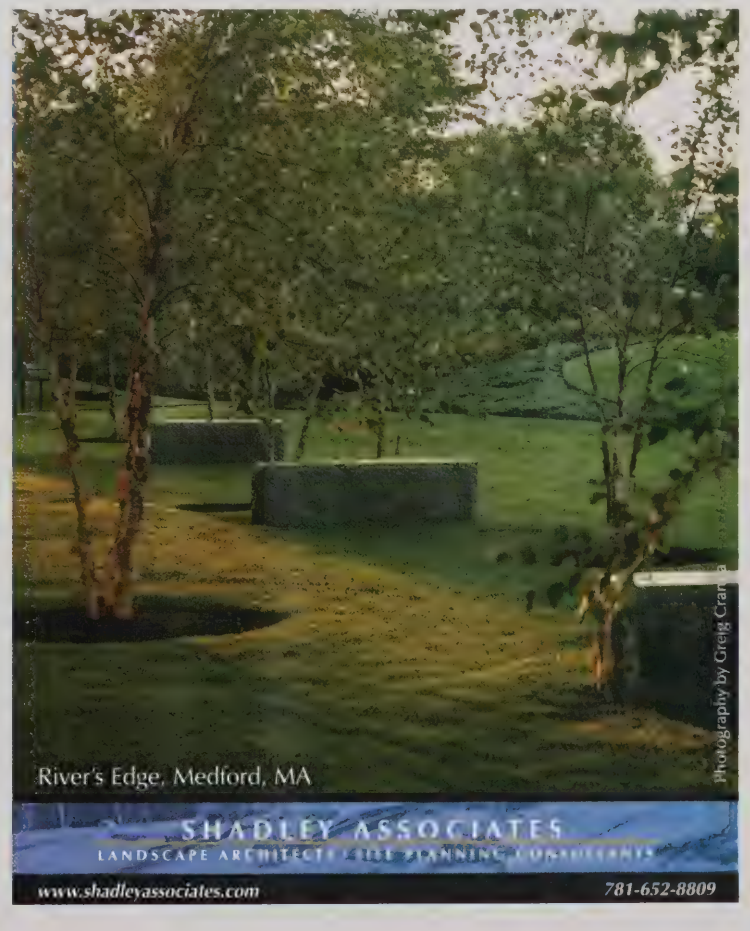
After all, our ears are "on" 24 hours a day. Some of us sleep through everything at night and yet hear the baby stirring. We can hear noises from a very soft whisper to an airplane engine and everything in between. Acoustic transmission and perception of noise is complex, and to create the right balance, a holistic approach is needed: one that considers use of advanced technology, connection between the senses, and behavioral and cultural education for everyone involved. ■

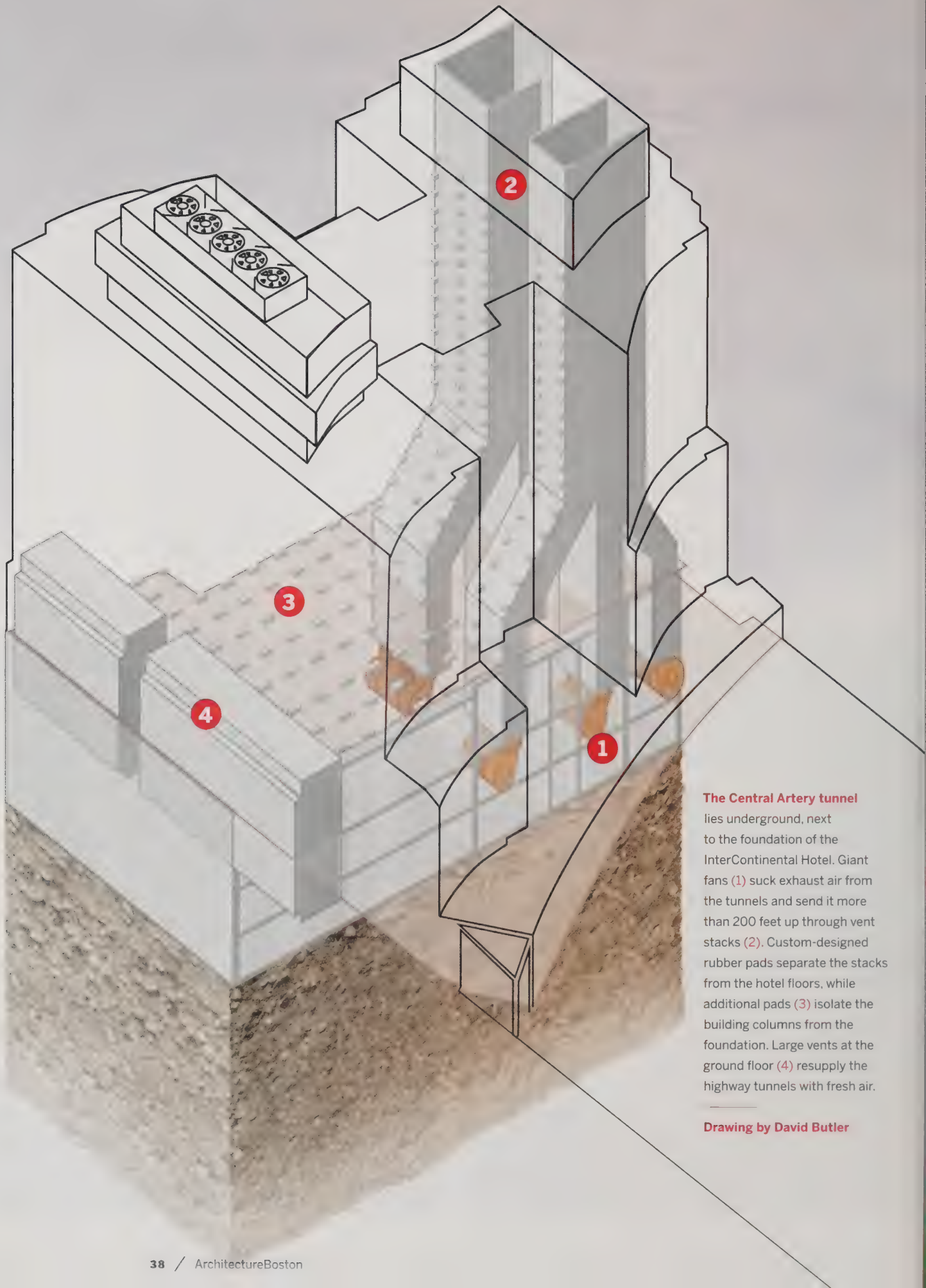
FOR MORE INFORMATION

See the current *Guidelines for Design and Construction of Health Care Facilities* at www.fgiguidelines.org.

To read more about The Society for the Suppression of Unnecessary Noise and Mark Twain's role in hospital noise control, visit: www.architectureboston.com







The Central Artery tunnel lies underground, next to the foundation of the InterContinental Hotel. Giant fans (1) suck exhaust air from the tunnels and send it more than 200 feet up through vent stacks (2). Custom-designed rubber pads separate the stacks from the hotel floors, while additional pads (3) isolate the building columns from the foundation. Large vents at the ground floor (4) resupply the highway tunnels with fresh air.

Drawing by David Butler

BRING ON DA NOISE

Rattle, roar, or ruckus: With these hidden acoustical techniques, you'll never know it's there.

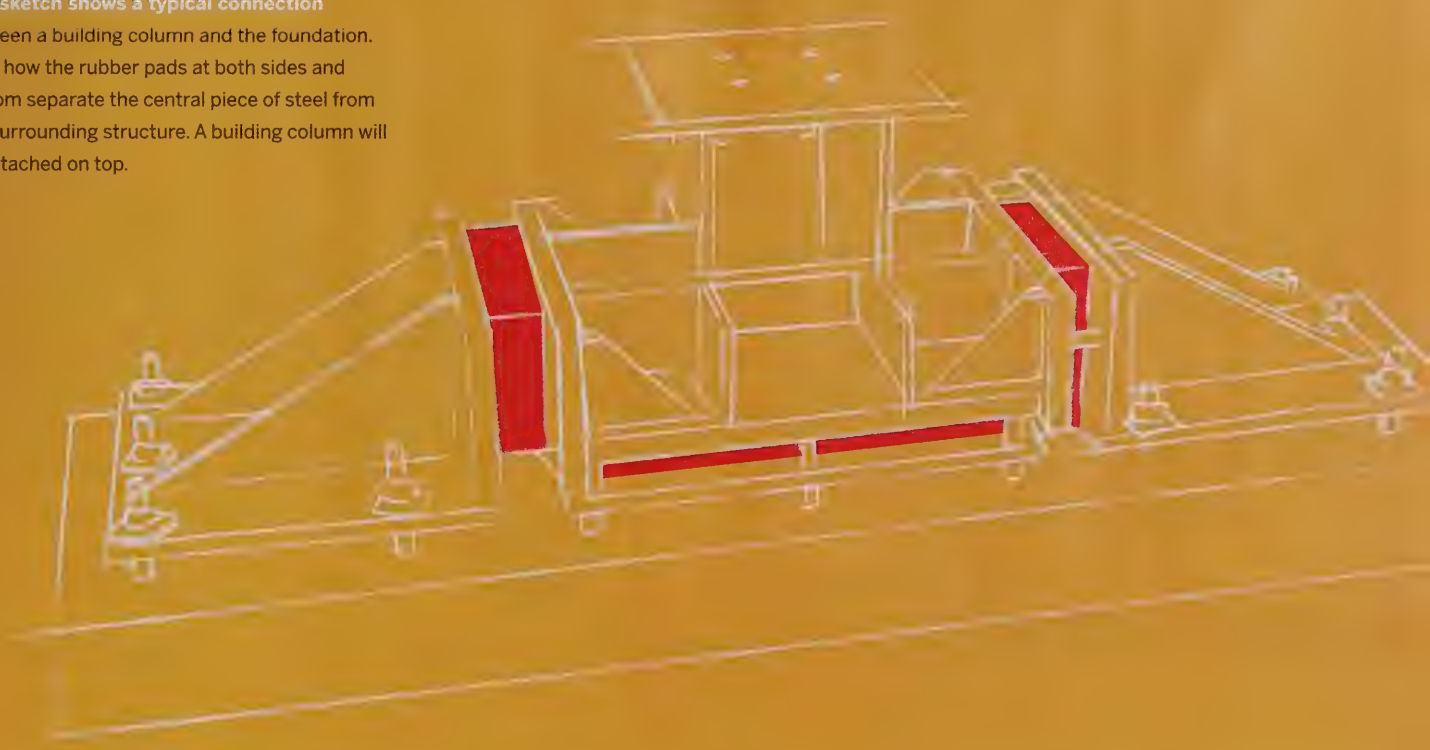
BY TIMOTHY FOULKES

Sound is all around us; sometimes more than we want. Architects are in a position to control unwanted sound in the built environment, leaving visitors blissfully unaware of the din. The following is an abbreviated guide to the hidden acoustics all around us, often known only to a building's design and construction team.

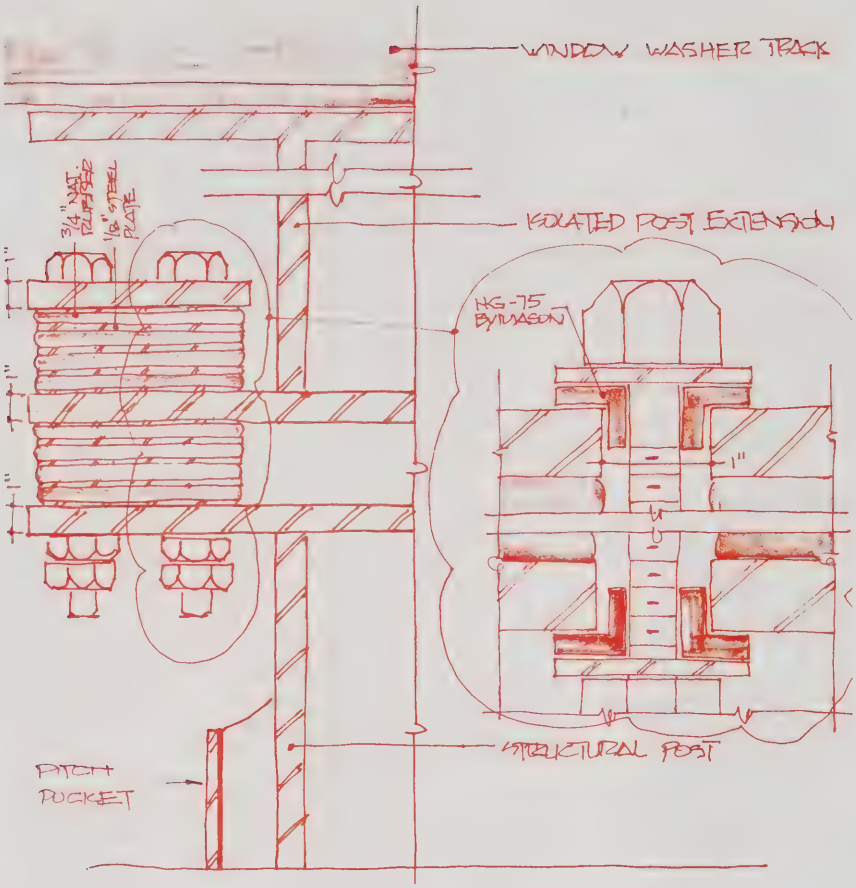
Few people realize, for example, that Boston's InterContinental Hotel and condominium building on Atlantic Avenue is isolated on rubber pads. Not so many years ago, this site was a mud pit with massive concrete vent stacks rising 237 feet above grade to discharge air from the Central Artery tunnel. These vent shafts are now concealed inside the hotel. Some guest rooms are directly against the vent shafts, and the four-diamond hotel has very high standards for comfort.

To control the effects of vibration from the fans, the entire building is isolated from the foundation piles on rubber pads. The rubber alone cost over $1 million. Cavanaugh Tocci's design of each pad had to take into account vertical loads, lateral loads, and seismic loads in all three axes. Large steel bolts and plates act as stops to limit deflection.

Many of us understand the fundamentals of noise reduction: Avoid gaps and leaks; use sound insulation in wall cavities; use multiple layers of gypsum board at walls where extra sound isolation is needed; employ thicker concrete floors to control sound and vibration. Beyond the basics, however, sophisticated (and expensive) techniques can control sound and vibration, easing the tumult of our daily lives.

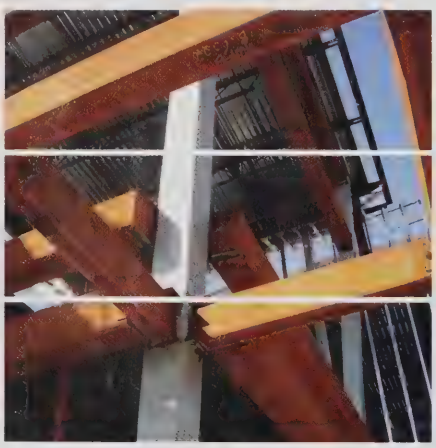


This sketch shows a typical connection between a building column and the foundation. Note how the rubber pads at both sides and bottom separate the central piece of steel from the surrounding structure. A building column will be attached on top.



The window wash rig at the new Atlantic Wharf office tower offers another custom-designed sound isolator system. High above street level, window washers work from a suspended platform. Their window wash rig moves around the building perimeter on a steel rail-and-column system at the roof. Below the roof are top-floor executive offices. In some buildings, moving these rigs on their steel rails creates distracting noise in offices below. At Atlantic Wharf, rig movements are almost inaudible because of a sophisticated system of rubber pads that isolate the track from the support columns. Each isolation point must be designed for vertical loads with and without the rig at that location, lateral loads in both directions, and uplift loads from the rig. This drawing, by Greg Tocci, shows the cross-section of a sound-isolated rig connection.

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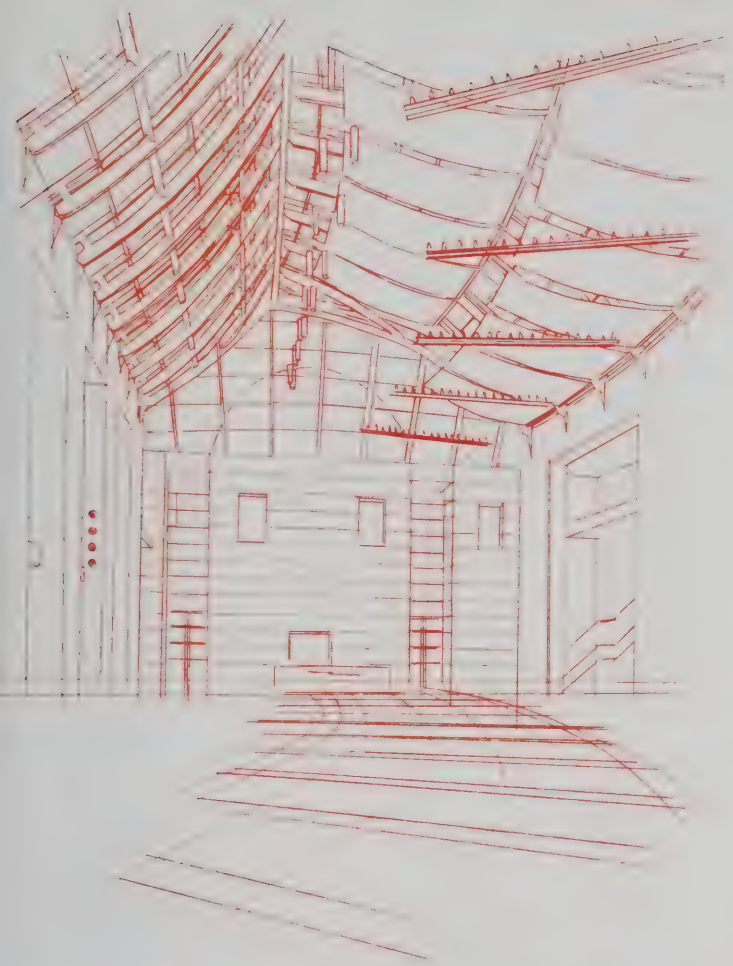
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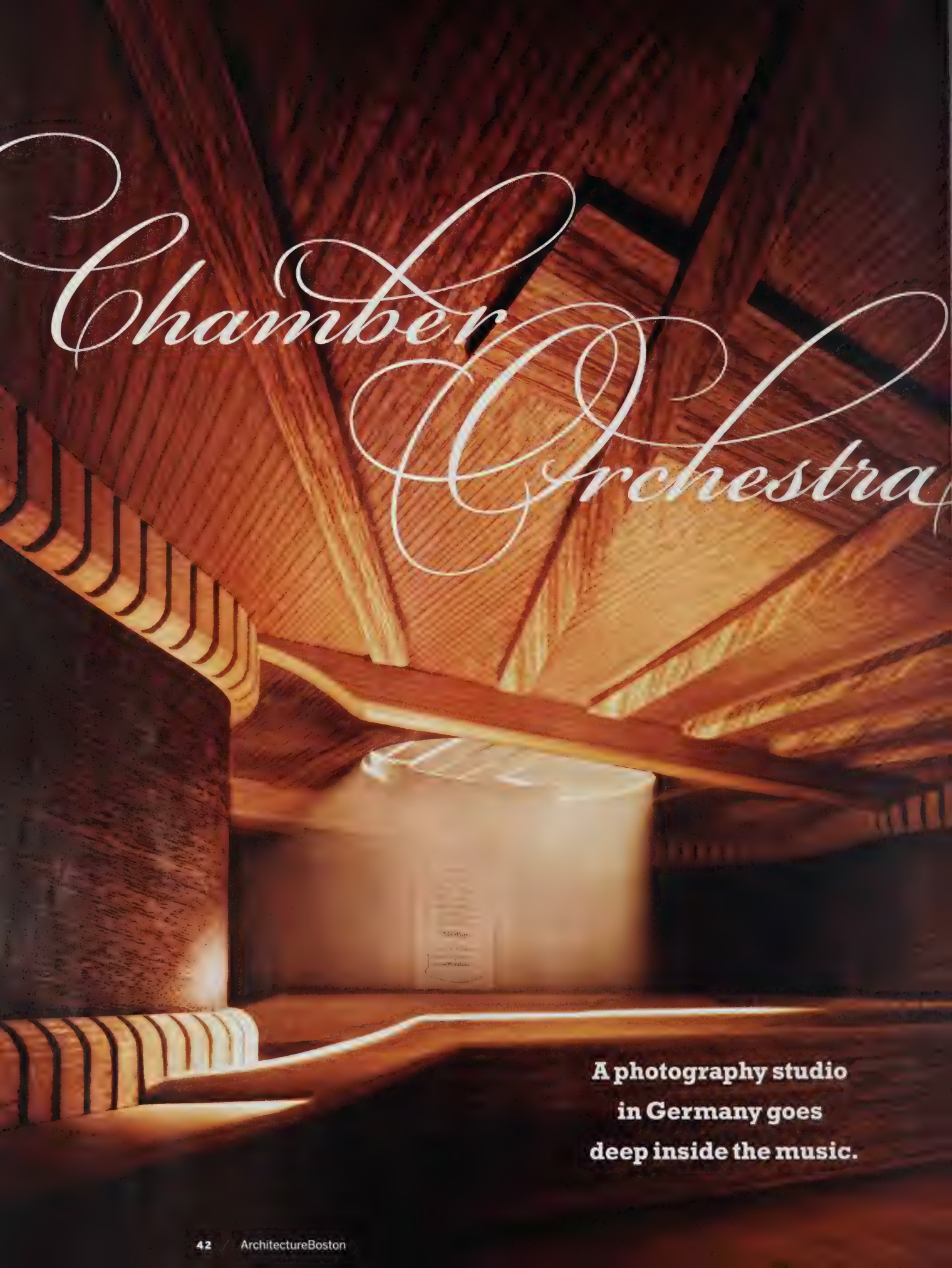
One look at the soaring atrium at the Peabody Essex Museum would lead most visitors to expect a noisy, reverberant space: The high ceilings, stone floors, and large glass areas are a potent combination for sound. But the acoustics are well controlled, with sound qualities more like an outdoor courtyard. Even more surprising, there are no obvious acoustic finishes.

One of the atrium's most important acoustic features, paradoxically, is background noise. The ventilation system was designed and adjusted to produce a low-level white noise, to mask the last 20 to 30 decibels of reverberation without interfering with speech. The jet nozzle air diffusers create this sound, and their velocity is carefully set to create the desired amount of noise.

The finish materials—sunshade fabric, brick walls, and ceiling panels at the adjacent balconies—also contribute. Each brick absorbs a small amount of sound; collectively the effect is significant. The sunshade fabric, covering a large surface area, works on a similar principle. The balcony ceiling panels—which absorb 85 percent of the sound that reaches them—are well-camouflaged, designed to look like smooth plaster.

Acoustic consultant Alban Bassuet of Arup wanted the space to be moderately reverberant. There should be some reflections to bring the space alive but still provide for easy communication. He used a computer model to calculate acoustic values and to simulate the sound of the space. Creative acoustic mitigation was wholly integrated with Moshe Safdie's architecture. ■





Chamber Orchestra

A photography studio in Germany goes deep inside the music.

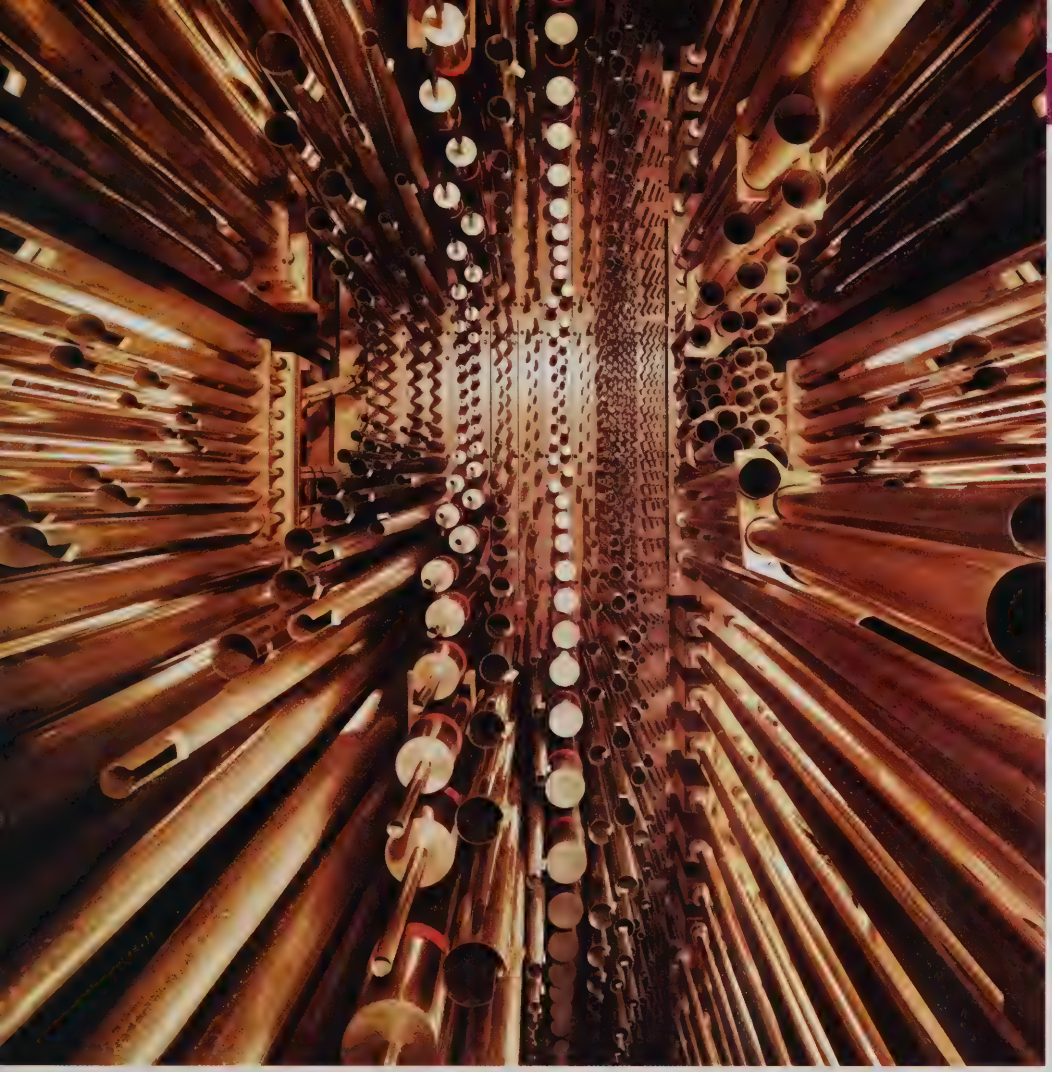
These spacious photographs of concert-instrument interiors—their chambers, and not just figuratively—were taken as part of a promotional campaign for the Berlin Philharmonic. Photographers Andreas Mierswa and Markus Kluska, whose studio is in Munich, used different cameras and lenses for each shot. Kluska described the work of angling the large Sinar commercial camera just right above the organ pipes as "an extreme acrobatic challenge."

If these photographs evoke the famous 1934 picture of Grand Central Station, it isn't an accident: Art director Björn Ewers suggested a study of that image as the team first considered the project. The series won the gold prize for photography from the Art Directors Club of Europe in 2009.



OPPOSITE: Guitar
ABOVE: Cello


XAVIER THOMINET



OPPOSITE: Contrabass
ABOVE: Pipe Organ
RIGHT: Flute





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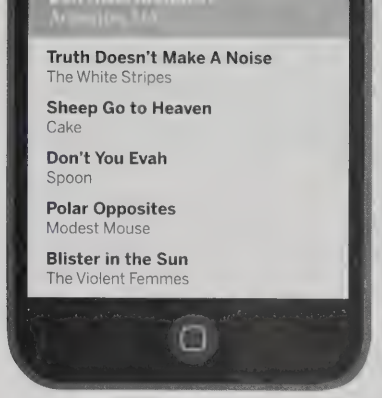
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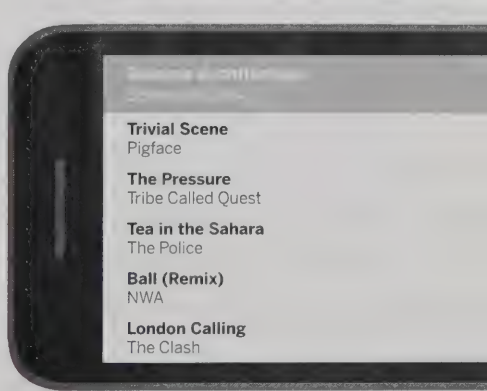












by Corey Zehngebot

Whether music should be played aloud in open office environments is controversial, though few will dispute that it can be an excellent motivator. Like athletes or surgeons, designers often rely on music to put them in the right mental space to tackle a particular assignment. We see athletes amidst the chaos of an event, eyes closed and headphones on, listening to whatever helps them get their game on. Designers have their own "fired up" music, craving the right ambient sound to produce good work.

At Utile, an open-plan office with about 20 employees, there is one big table where we all sit, white walls, and—notably—no enclosed spaces whatsoever. The politics of the communal playlist can be contentious, since what is audible is inescapable.

After working in the office for a few short months, I inherited control of the office transmitter and speakers. Though initially flattered, I soon realized that playlist commando is a thankless job.

Crafting a playlist in the working world is not an academic exercise. In architecture school, headphone culture was dominant. If you so much as played a note of music aloud, objections were immediate. But relying on your own computer for music wasn't as limiting as it seemed: With hundreds of users connected to a central server, one had access to weeks of shared music.

While some made no effort to camouflage their identities, most chose more cryptic names ("smittenwithsmithson," "discretizeMYsurfaces," "Architecture-WOMANifestos") for their musical catalogs. Even within this cloak of anonymity, I suspect that music was being used as a signifier, with lesser-known albums or artists included in playlists for the cachet rather than the love. Could everyone really have liked Brian Eno that much?

In a small office the soundtrack must be approached curatorially. This is further complicated when playing to an expanded crowd, which often includes clients within earshot. Consequently, there must be a greater tolerance for headphones. Although office etiquette may frown on them, headphones provide necessary focus when a deadline is imminent or if there are meetings nearby.

So I beat on… with some interesting interludes. There was a six-month stretch at Utile when the Northeastern intern took an active role in playlist programming. When I was away at a meeting or just forgot, she would commandeer the audio jack and turn on her personal favorites. Often, this was Girl Talk, AKA Greg Gillis, the 29-year-old artist who produces high-octane mash-ups on his computer using digital samples from other tunes. This was fun for a while, but soon "normal" music began to sound bland, and I found myself wanting to hybridize everything. Not good.

When the idea was floated to create a shared Pandora Internet account, I was genuinely enthusiastic. Unfortunately, its use-value peaked right around Christmastime, when many in the office were struck by the urge to hear "Feliz Navidad" around the clock.

Recently, Utile entered a new age by introducing a dedicated WiFi network just for music. Now everyone on staff with an iPod has the power to press play. This has obviated the need for a playlist commando, about which I feel mainly relief, happy to allow others to play music when the spirit moves them or simply to have periods of (blessed) quiet. ■

Corey Zehngebot works as an urban designer and planner at Utile.

RANDOM SHUFFLE

Here are the top five songs that appeared at random on the playlists of a few area firms. Go to www.architectureboston.com to see more and submit your own.

“I imagine myself



composing a space."

Jonas Salk, August Komendant, and the Woman populate a new chamber opera inspired by the life and work of Louis Kahn.

LEWIS SPRATLAN speaks with FREDERICK PETERS

OPPOSITE
Louis I. Kahn, *Tower of Villa Rufolo, Ravello, Italy*, 1929, watercolor on paper, 14¼ × 10". From the collection of Sue Ann Kahn. © Sue Ann Kahn. Courtesy of Lori Bookstein Fine Art.

In 2005, composers Lewis Spratlan and Jenny Kallick began work on an opera inspired by Louis Kahn. Kahn, who excelled in music and once considered becoming a composer, was especially cognizant of how sound works in a physical space. "Space has tonality," he often said.

Kallick, a professor of music at Amherst College, made recordings of the "acoustic envelope" at several Kahn buildings, which were employed in composing the work's prelude and interludes. Key elements from Spratlan's music were integrated into this electro-acoustic music, creating a seamless connection between the narrative world of the characters and the sounding spaces that filled their dreams.

Opening in the ruins of Rome and ending with the healing waters at Kahn's Salk Institute, *ARCHITECT: A Chamber Opera* narrates the dramatic arc of Kahn's journey from dreamer to master builder.

ARCHITECT has not yet been performed live, but a video will be screened as part of the Architecture and Design Film Festival in New York City, October 17–21.

In this interview, Spratlan discusses the project with Frederick Peters, board chairman of New Music USA, which supports composers, performers, and audiences of new American music.

Frederick Peters: How did you decide to create *ARCHITECT*? Did it arise from a personal interest in architecture?

Lewis Spratlan: Jenny Kallick was really the creator of this piece. While a student in New Haven, she became very interested in Kahn's two important buildings there, the Yale Art Gallery and the Yale Center for British Art, particularly after seeing Nathaniel Kahn's film *My Architect*. She decided that she wanted to immerse herself in what these buildings stood for, and was particularly interested in their sonic value. Kahn spoke often of his interest in the sonic qualities of his buildings. He had a strong interest in music; in fact, he had even considered a career as a composer. He frequently spoke of music and architecture and sound in one breath, so to speak.

Jenny began this project by doing recordings, together with John Downey, a student of hers, at the Salk Institute; at the Yale Center for British Art; and at the Exeter, New Hampshire, Library. They went to various locations in these buildings and would first of all record just the room tone. I can't technically describe what room tone is, but when you're in any given room, you're never in total silence; the environment is producing almost imperceptible sound. That's room tone.

Then she would have various sounds made in that room—a hand clap, a drum smash, a squawk on an instrument, usually a quite short burst of sound—to determine what the so-called sonic envelope in that space would do to those sounds.

Frederick Peters: Was she thinking opera at this point, or was she just thinking it was interesting to collect the sounds?

Lewis Spratlan: At that point, we weren't talking about it as an opera. At that time, the Yale Art Gallery was really the only Kahn building I knew. I didn't have a very elaborate idea of Kahn—who he was in the world of architecture or what he stood for, particularly. But I knew I liked that building.

Jenny presented me with four or five sets of lyrics, and I was very taken by them, right away. A lot of them include Kahn's own words: There are volumes of Kahn's writings and remarks that were taken down by people as he talked with them.

Very early on, she said, "You've got to go see *My Architect*." It was a revelatory film to me. I think the main theme in the life of Kahn and at the heart of this work is—and it's something I've been aware of for years as an artist myself—the cost to one's private life of an artistic career, which is exaggerated in Kahn's case, but it's something that all artists are aware of.

Frederick Peters: It's overwhelmingly strong in the film, how everybody around him paid for what he did.

I've often thought about the commanding forces at work in both architecture and music, and they are remarkably similar. —*Lewis Spratlan*

Lewis Spratlan: Absolutely. Frank Lloyd Wright is an interestingly parallel case—the same sort of cavalier obliviousness toward people who were extremely close to him. But we observe it all the time. Art has a kind of commanding quality if you're its servant. My wife might disagree, but I think I've mended my ways a little after seeing that film.

Frederick Peters: Early on in the opera, Kahn says that space has tonality: "I imagine myself composing a space." One could flip that and say music has architecture. Working on an opera about an architect, were you unusually conscious of structure? Were there particular ways in which you tried to build architecture, or a sensitivity to architecture, into the work?

Lewis Spratlan: There are two conspicuous places where I was quite self-conscious about trying to evoke architecture in the music itself. I've been acutely aware for a long time what architecture is and what it has to be. I've often thought about the commanding forces that are at work in both architecture and music, and they are remarkably similar. Common to both is the fact that there's a surface: the tune, or the façade. But behind that surface, in both cases, there are elaborate mechanisms that allow that surface to be understood and appreciated: the harmonic contrapuntal structure of music, or the whole collection of structural elements that are involved in architecture.

One of the most conspicuous moments when I am invoking architecture in a frank way is the opening of the soliloquy we hear Kahn deliver about what a building is and what a building needs to be. It's called "The Flame." He had this rather elaborately articulated notion that was consistently at the center of any structure that he was working on. It was his metaphor for the sort of irreducible purpose of that building: why it existed, what its mission on earth was. And then he had this rather concentric idea of subsidiary functions that were paid attention to in the design of a building. So there's this sense of centeredness and then structure surrounding layers of concentric function.

Frederick Peters: And in the opera, that's described in a quasi-religious way, as if you had the people within the temple, then the people who want to be in the courtyard of the temple, and then the people who want to be even further away but nonetheless in proximity to the temple.

Lewis Spratlan: And those who want to just wink at it. So there is an attempt to communicate that sense of concentric qualities in this aria. And the introduction to it is my best shot at setting up some architectural elements. What I had in mind was two walls intersecting with one another, but on a single grounding, lying on a common platform. The platform in this case is the lowest sound that was makeable by this orchestra, which was the E of the double bass. In my imagination they were great, towering walls, so the whole tonal span is laid out in them. But they're distinctly different: One might think of one being in shade and the other in bright sunlight, or one rough and the other smooth. I wanted a sense of two independent elements, which were at the same time linked by their being on this ground of low E.

In fact, when we first hear the voice of Kahn, it appears during the sounding of one of these walls in the form of an oboe. The oboe is the surrogate for Kahn in this piece. The other moment is in the introduction to the first number in the piece, a duet—

Frederick Peters: When they're in Rome.

Lewis Spratlan: Yes, there's an invocation constantly of stone work. I was trying to get at the whole sense

of these interlocking blocks of material. The music actually is like brick work, or interlocking elements. Again, not in a way that it's going to make you pop up and say, "Ah! Well, that's a picture of a stone," but this is my response to trying to make that invocation.

Frederick Peters: The music during the first part of the opera, up until the entry of the Woman, has in many ways a lapidary quality—an impression of being polished and intellectually driven. Then the Woman enters, and suddenly you're in more of a sense world. Can you talk a little about the Woman? She's such an interesting apparition in this highly intellectualized, male environment.

Lewis Spratlan: Anybody who has any kind of familiarity with Kahn is aware that his private life was turbulent, to say the least. Complex. He was married and had a daughter by his wife, and he had at least two mistresses, each of whom bore a child by him. We felt that if we were going to be telling any kind of serious tale about Kahn, the issue of women in his life had to come up. So we made the decision to create an amalgam of these three women and call the character "Woman." What she stands for in the opera is an exemplar of the difficulty that he has with personal relationships. She feels neglected, not incorporated fully into his existence, on the outside all of the time.

We see the Woman twice. The first time, as you say, she interrupts this train of intellectual considerations and male dominance that had been occurring, and it's a very abrupt shift. We see her just after she has received a letter from Kahn that includes a poem by E. E. Cummings, which we hear her read. It's a complex reading: She doesn't simply sing it straight through; each of the lines is sung twice, and on its second reading, more of her reflection and the spice of her understanding are injected into it.



ABOVE
Louis I. Kahn, *Canal Houses, Venice, Italy*, 1928. watercolor on paper. 10 × 8". From the collection of Sue Ann Kahn. © Sue Ann Kahn. Courtesy of Lori Bookstein Fine Art.

Frederick Peters: Which then is followed by one of my favorite moments in the opera, the concrete duet, in which Kahn and the Engineer sing like workmen with Italian accents about how to temper concrete. Suddenly, for the first time, there are people—guys with wheelbarrows and bags of cement; it's actually a job site. And there, in the background, you see a building being put together while they are singing about how it has to be tempered with the right vibrations. Very funny.

Lewis Spratlan: I think this duet is one of the strangest operatic moments in captivity. Jenny imagined it as a moment between Kahn and [August] Komendant, showing their complicated relationship, as was the case with all the important relationships in Kahn's life. Komendant, by many reports, was largely responsible for a lot of Kahn's buildings even being built. Kahn was a tremendous dreamer and would come up with schemes about which most engineers would have said, "Why do you even show me this? It can't be done." Komendant was an imaginative, large-brained thinker who could find a way to make these buildings happen. So they were symbiotically very heavily involved with one another. At the same time, Kahn was abusive to him and felt that he was too strict about things, too orderly. [Komendant] wouldn't allow himself to be engaged in Kahn's pipe dreams. And Kahn was annoyed by that.

Frederick Peters: These visionary architects desperately need good structural engineers; otherwise, they end up with buildings that leak or barely stand up. They may

be conceptually brilliant, but for architecture to work, the building actually has to stand up. The doors have to open and close. That clearly is where Komendant was indispensable.

Lewis Spratlan: Both Kahn and Komendant were of Estonian heritage, so this duet starts with an imagined reminiscing about Estonia—the flounder, the little red potatoes. And then the other thing they share is their love of concrete. As I understand it, concrete is a tremendously important structural element in many of Kahn's buildings. And Komendant was apparently an absolute master of concrete. The concrete in most of their buildings has this incredible integrity to it: it simply doesn't crack. It also, and this is very noticeable in the Salk Institute, develops a patina, a burnished quality that you don't think of with concrete. When you look at it, it doesn't appear rough; it seems to have a finish to it. In any case, he was obsessive about getting concrete right. So they did share this love and respect for concrete. That's not an incidental thing. We imagined that when this is staged, they'll be having a beer somewhere, just a couple of guys who finally find a moment to sit and relax, then they fall into this riffing about concrete.

Frederick Peters: It's very funny.

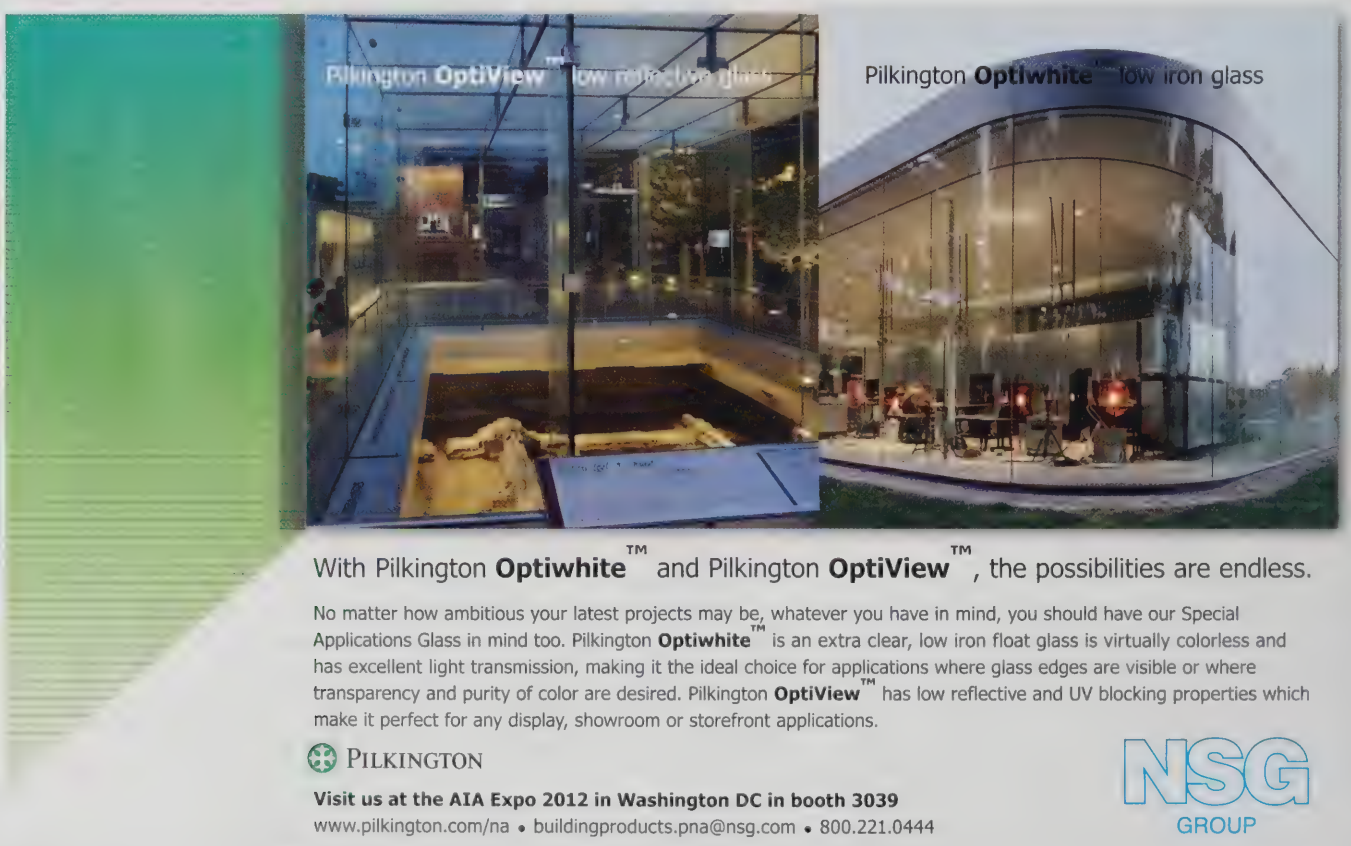
Lewis Spratlan: It is funny, with this constant refrain: "Mix it right and cure it with the right vibrations." It's borderline nonsense, a deliberately heel-kicking moment in the piece. Like many of the great heavy-duty operas, there are wonderful moments of levity in it.

Frederick Peters: Then you move into an extended mad scene, very intense and just about 180 degrees from the lightness of the concrete duet.

Lewis Spratlan: This takes all the frustration and disappointment that we see from the Woman in her first number and sends it to its furthest extreme. Talk about a woman at the end of her rope—she's just losing it.

Frederick Peters: And not even articulate through much of it.

Lewis Spratlan: I've invented this kind of private language that she has, grunts and moans and squawks and squeals, and sometimes things that actually sound like language but don't mean anything to us semantically. There are a few English words in it, but



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they're all chosen from that E. E. Cummings poem that she sings earlier. It's mainly just agony, which then turns into rage; then there is a moment of retrospective reflection on sexual joy that she had with him; then it lapses again into real fury at the end.

Frederick Peters: If you think about the opera in terms of movements, that scene is followed by what I see as the reconciliation section. You get the third embodiment of the baritone as the Healer, and Salk and Kahn have this lovely interaction on the grass in which Salk soothes him into sleep with a wonderful little lullaby. Then there's a dream sequence, which ends up with a reference to the Salk Institute, which seems to be where all the different themes come together. So you have all three of the characters at the end singing very lyrically about the water flowing through the structure and out to the sea, with obviously all the things that the sea represents.

Lewis Spratlan: Jonas Salk was very aware of Kahn's work and actually commissioned him to design the Salk Institute. Salk had this vision of a marriage of science and art—and not only the art of the building, but he wanted art to be in the air at this building. In fact, to this day there is an ample line item in the budget of the Salk Institute for artistic productions, and they have a little theater there.

Frederick Peters: *ARCHITECT* hasn't yet been performed live on stage; how do you imagine that performance when it occurs?

Lewis Spratlan: Right from the beginning, we had this idea of its being very portable. It has a total cast of only three singers, just nine players, a very small orchestra. As I like to say, sort of a two-station-wagon opera. And why? We wanted the piece to be able to be put on in various [Kahn] buildings. This was an important thing for us, requiring an absolute minimum—in fact, requiring no traditional theatrical space at all. No drops, no orchestra pit. A flat space that can hold an audience, that's really all we were thinking about. We would be delighted to have it put on in theatrical venues, although it would just be lost at the Met or virtually any traditional opera house.

Two of the Kahn buildings have already shown great interest in having performances, so we just have to raise some money and do the planning. It won't just happen overnight, but those will be the next stages. I hope this piece has a long and varied life. ■

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For [illegible] the opera, go to: architecturebost[illegible]



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David McCullough—Thursday, May 17
Award-winning historian and author of *The Greater Journey*

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Architect and the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Architects of Healing—Saturday, May 19
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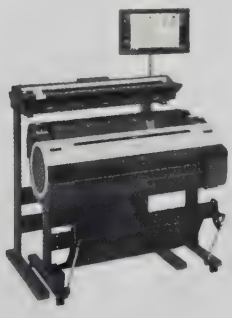
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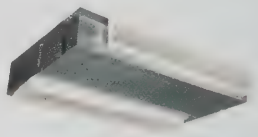
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Books

Spaces Speak, Are You Listening? Experiencing Aural Architecture
Barry Blesser and Linda-Ruth Salter
The MIT Press, 2007
Reviewed by Matthew J. Kiefer

Unless you're an acoustician or a concert violinist, your auditory experience of built space is probably intuitive or even unconscious, at least until sound becomes noise that disturbs you. So it may surprise you to know there is a proto-discipline called "aural architecture": the properties of the physical environment that can be experienced by attentive listening.

It has its own language, grounded in audio engineering, cognitive psychology, and sensory anthropology, and the authors—a former MIT professor and digital audio pioneer, and his wife, an independent scholar—speak it fluently. In fact, they seem to have invented it, or at least synthesized the coinages of others, in this comprehensive, lucid, and insightful account of a discipline you may not even have known existed. And yet it is unavailable as an audio book!

Auditory spatial awareness, though it varies widely among listeners, is innately human. It helps us navigate, influences social behavior, enhances our perception of voices and music, and affects the sensory experience of our environment. It can't really be taught, but it can be learned, as the almost extrasensory spatial awareness of some blind persons attests.

For millennia, the acoustic commons promoted social cohesion. The Greek amphitheater spread oratory and drama to the masses; cathedrals were reverberating sonic instruments for Gregorian chant. Until transportation arenas replaced acoustic arenas in the 20th century, towns were bounded by the reach of the church bells or the chiming of the town clock.

As Quakers know, quietude preserves the acoustic arena as a common resource. Yet we have mostly let "sonic power"—noise from vehicles, machines, and loudspeakers—disrupt acoustic geography. Broadcasting, recording, and amplification have largely converted the shared experience of music, drama, and public speech into private activities, reflecting the larger societal shift from belonging to autonomy and privacy.

The acoustic attributes of built spaces can be shaped intentionally (say for a concert hall), but they mostly arise incidentally. In fact, as the authors admit, aural architecture is barely a recognized discipline. Although they are more interested in explication than exhortation, their book provides a persuasive argument for being more intentional about the sonic effects of built space—and for abating noise pollution.

Since auditory spatial awareness seems to work just fine even when you're unaware of it, if your nightstand is already sagging, you may not feel compelled to add this book to the pile. But it's absorbing reading, and if you're designing space where sound quality is important—not just concert halls, but restaurants, libraries, public buildings, and places of worship—you really should learn this language.

One wonders if Boston City Hall would be less reviled if its visually compelling but acoustically challenged spaces had benefited from such fluency.



Matthew J. Kiefer is a land-use attorney at Goulston & Storrs in Boston. He teaches in the urban planning program at the Harvard Graduate School of Design.

Every Day is a Good Day: The Visual Art of John Cage
Hayward Publishing, 2010
Reviewed by Andrew Witkin

John Cage brought a nonjudgmental approach to the highly opinionated world of modern art. For a man supposedly apolitical, his example is a bold one. This does not mean that *we* have to look at his work with the same approach.

This book appears, at first, to be just like any other on Cage: reverential, referential, and lacking much in-depth investigation. The good news is that it is far more informative than just reverential, and far more educational than just referential. It claims to be the first to present the full swath of Cage's visual output and does a solid job presenting a good number of works to illuminate the growth, changes, and alternate paths Cage chose.

Consisting of six essays, an index of sorts, and a slew of color plates, *Every Day is a Good Day* provides firsthand accounts of those who assisted Cage (Kathan Brown, Ray Kass, and Laura Kuhn); those who had experiences with him in the visual art world (Irving Sandler); those who helped formulate presentations for or with him (Julie Lazar); and an artist, Jeremy Millar, who conceived of both the book and the accompanying touring exhibition to present Cage's work, explain some of it, and to treat it with a Cage-like approach.



Andrew Witkin is director of Barbara Krakow Gallery in Boston, a working artist, and a voracious consumer of all things Cage.

Throughout the book, several references are made to Arnold Schoenberg demanding that Cage devote his life to music (and so he did), but there is little in the way of real discussion of where Cage's visual works (begun in 1969) fit in to the greater world of the arts. *4'33"* is well known; the use of chance procedures in composing, the event/circus/performance at Black Mountain, prepared piano, use of live radio, and on and on are all elements of Cage's work that have their place in history (whether one likes the results or not). This book does not try to deal with that sort of question in the visual world, but it does provide a primer on who helped Cage when he was interested in making things.

In Cage scholarship, there is much assumed. This book does an excellent job of ignoring that approach and presenting some basics: the primer in the back of the book that serves as a loose dictionary of Cage terms; the information Kuhn lays out; and the essential (though rather abbreviated) explanation by Lazar of how Cage's last great action—*Rolywholyover A Circus*—was conceived, how it began, and what it was. For all these reasons and for the opportunity to see images of some dynamic and layered works, *Every Day* is a welcome addition to the world of Cage literature.

Let's hope the next one takes the information available in this and, much as Cage would have appreciated, asks more questions without worrying about what the answers would be.



David Scharfenberg is news editor at *The Providence Phoenix*. He drives a rusting Mazda with a working horn.

Honku: The Zen Antidote to Road Rage
Aaron Naparstek
Villard Books, 2003
Reviewed by David Scharfenberg

The car horn, despite its ubiquity—or, perhaps, because of it—retains a remarkable capacity to enrage.

Take Aaron Naparstek, a writer and Web producer parked in his one-bedroom apartment in Brooklyn around Christmastime. No stranger to honking, he suddenly finds himself seized by anger when some punk in a crappy blue sedan outside his window lets out a piercing, nonstop blast of particular violence.

To the fridge he goes and comes back with a carton of eggs—determined to make contact with the windshield. One, two, three. By the time he hits glass, the guy is out of the car, shouting obscenities and threatening to make a deadly return that night.

"I realized," Naparstek writes, "that I had snapped. I had crossed a line. I had soaked up so much honking and road rage that I had become the honking."

Determined to find a yolkless outlet for his anger, he begins crafting honku—haikus about honking. His first:

> You from New Jersey
> honking in front of my house
> in your SUV

Soon he is posting the poems in the neighborhood—inspiring honkus from neighbors, "please stop honking" leaflets from 76th Precinct cops, and, eventually, Naparstek's book, *Honku: The Zen Antidote to Road Rage*.

The slim volume occasionally descends into cliché. I could have done without the verse about the guy in the sports car with the midlife crisis. And the swipe at our fair city is of eye-rolling predictability:

> Nearly ran me down
> then flipped me the bird as well—
> welcome to Boston

Flip this, Aaron! (OK, maybe you're right about us.) But all in all, the book—perfectly sized for your glove compartment—is a clever, self-conscious, and biting take on all things automotive.

> Gruesome hit-and-run
> fatalities up ahead
> how awful—I'm late

> All claim innocence
> in line at the impound lot
> above, wing'd pigs soar

> Ignorant boyfriend—
> honking in the driveway does
> not impress my dad

Some of these poems seem aimed at inducing a knowing laugh—no more, no less. But the best of them, like the verse on the misguided boyfriend, tap into a fundamental truth: The automobile is not mere conveyance, not just transportation from one meaningful spot to the next.

No, it is a meaningful spot itself: a place for a jerk in a blue sedan; a clueless beau; and, yes, a bird-wielding Bostonian to reveal something essential—and maybe a little ugly—about his character.



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urbanremix.gatech.edu
This highly interactive public art project invites anyone to record city neighborhood sounds with a smartphone, upload, and mix. Invented by a trio of Georgia Tech professors, so far urban sound events have happened in San Francisco, Atlanta, and New York City. Perhaps it's time for Boston? ■

The Rest Is Silence

Jeffrey Mansfield is a Master of Architecture candidate at the Harvard GSD. His research explores the intersections between deafness, mainstream culture, architecture, urbanism, and politics.



RIGHT
Rational Impulse, Tom Kotik, 2004. Constructed of wood and foam—materials commonly used to mitigate sound—Tom Kotik's art explores what he calls "the architecture of silence."

When Beethoven's Ninth Symphony premiered in 1824, it was met with celebratory praise, offset by ambivalence toward its stylistic breaks from the composer's early work. Some of Beethoven's critics attributed these anomalies to his inability to hear, or worse, to his diminished genius; some believed his talent declined after he became profoundly deaf 10 years earlier.

And so it remained until 1870, when German composer Richard Wagner published the essay *Beethoven* and rescued a great musical work from obscurity. Recognizing the elemental quality of Beethoven's notes, Wagner insisted that Beethoven's rejection of conventional tonal, rhythmic, and textural continuity in favor of short primordial bursts liberated music from the representational qualities of the outer world.

As the contemporary artist Louise Stern points out, the absence of representation also begets vulnerability. According to Stern, "Words are our protection against the world." In using our voices, we represent ourselves to the world and establish the terms on which we are judged. Our voice creates a protective shell, projecting polished versions of ourselves.

Like Beethoven and Stern, I am profoundly deaf. Like Stern, I am prelingually deaf. I use a sign language interpreter to facilitate conversation. Without an interpreter, I am often excluded as others converse. When I can no longer suppress an accumulating panic, I spasmodically interject a request for someone to summarize. This is inevitably delayed or out of place, a short burst, not unlike those of Beethoven's Ninth, where I communicate a desire to communicate. In these situations, I am exposed to the world, devoid of my protective shell.

Our bodies are transmitters of voices and also receivers of sound. Often the outermost layer of our body's engagement with the world, audible sound acts as a sort of extended skin. In the absence of sound, as in profound deafness, this extended skin fails to engage with the auditory environment. Silence.

Yet silence is also liberation. Cut off from language and the information saturation of the auditory environment, we turn inward to our bodies, where each sense, including hearing, now amplifies a visceral, elemental, and intimate relationship with the world outside ourselves.

As a child taking in Boston Ballet's *The Nutcracker*, unmoved by the orchestra, I marveled at how each dancer's outfit folded or creased a certain way with each movement. In my innocence, I believed that each crease, each fold, was specified by the choreographer. What I experienced at the ballet was a heightened sense of the choreography between the body and the world.

Deafness can be an abscission from mainstream society, but it can also challenge traditional modes of communication, with interesting results. Alexander Graham Bell drew on his expertise as an elocutionist for deaf pupils to perfect the telephone. Thomas Edison's deafness provided practical impetus for the light bulb and the phonograph. To communicate with his deaf wife, the computer scientist Vinton Cerf, himself hard of hearing, developed the TCP/IP, the protocols that helped launch the Internet.

In my work as an intern with the Portable Light Project, led by KVA Matx, we are challenging the conventional energy grid by introducing new micro-energy infrastructures to remote communities such as the Brazilian Amazon. Through portable solar textile kits outfitted with LED lighting and USB ports to charge cell phones and small appliances, this distributed infrastructure will give these communities a voice, enabling them to engage on their own terms.

The representational environment—including architectural representation, like construction drawings—is oversaturated with information and language. But when we step away from this construct, as in deafness or in an isolated Amazon community, we allow ourselves new ways of seeing the world. In deafness, as in architecture, the decision to forego representation in favor of silence is a political one. ■

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MEMORY

ABOVE
Jere Smith, *Wunderkammer*, 36" × 48", mixed media, 2009.

COVER
Anna Schuleit's installation art explores places society often forgets. *Bloom*, site-specific installation at the Massachusetts Mental Health Center, Boston. November 14–17, 2003. For more information and images of her work, please visit www.anna-schuleit.com.

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George D. Callender Square
By Conor MacDonald



Winslow Homer Studio Mills Whitaker Architects ©trentbellphotography

The Way We Were

My father was a photographer, long before the days of digital cameras. There was something magical in the way images floated to the surface of what looked to be ordinary white paper while he worked in the darkroom, bathed in red "safe" light. A certain wizardry was also implied in the materials he'd send out to brides-to-be or the parents of graduates, promising to "capture precious moments"—as if the shutter on his old Graflex had the power to stop time.

We can't, of course, stop time, any more than we can parachute into the future. But we do carry fragments of photographic images with us into every encounter with the present, even if we don't paste them into books stamped in gold leaf. We call this bit of time travel "memory."

It's a slippery thing, memory, changing a little bit every time we take one out to play. In his elegiac novel *The Sense of an Ending*, Julian Barnes describes memory as a mercurial, unreliable narrator for our lives. "What you end up remembering isn't always the same as what you have witnessed," he writes. "Time doesn't act as a fixative, rather as a solvent."

Experience colors memory; cultural or political developments alter what—or whom—we decide is worth remembering. In 2009 the Patrick O'Hearn school in Dorchester, dedicated in the 1950s to a former city building commissioner, was stripped of its title and renamed for a pioneering principal. It is, for now, the William W. Henderson Inclusion Elementary School. All is not lost, though; at the rededication, officials also unveiled a small plaque near the entrance. It reads: "Welcome to the Patrick O'Hearn Foyer."

Memory offers only fugitive images, and subjective ones at that. It's no wonder we turn to physical repositories for what we cherish, whether a spiral notebook or the pyramids of Giza.

Fashions come and go—monumental or minimalist; titan or barefoot boy—shaped by society's moods and self-regard. We memorialize the places, people, or events that possess the values we want to project into the future: bravery, selflessness, community. But too often the monuments glorify less lofty emotions, such as vengeance, or clannishness. Why not a memorial to a perfect summer day? We can build that with our own senses.

Memory is often referred to metaphorically as a skein, a fabric—a tapestry—and indeed many architects employ old materials to evoke associations with the past. Sometimes the effect is haunting, as with Pritzker Prize–winner Wang Shu's use of recycled tiles from demolished traditional houses in his exemplars of the "new" China. But what, pray tell, are pieces of the Coney Island boardwalk doing in the floor of the Barnes Foundation's new Philadelphia location?



PHOTO: Conor MacDonald

Whole communities have been designed explicitly to evoke somebody's concept of "the good old days:" Celebration, Disney's dream town in Florida, or Poundbury Village outside of Dorset, England, championed by that country's chief architect manqué, Prince Charles. Some people love its town green and country lanes; some consider it a kind of cultural necrophilia.

Each of these built memorials is, in its own way, an effort to stop time, a hedge against mortality. But as the designer Julian Bonder observes elsewhere in these pages, memory is an action that is always occurring *in the present*. This is as obvious as it is profound, since the present moment is all we ever have.

It is up to us whether we make it precious. ■

Renée Loth
Editor

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On "Listen" (Summer 2012)

In their article "Hospital, Heal Thyself," Mollica Manandhar and Paula Buick go far in highlighting subtle interventions that can greatly improve the experience of medical facilities. Design considerations can carefully integrate acoustics, cautious lighting, indoor air quality, and even access and visibility to nature. These elements have shown to be more than experiential improvements but actually integral components to improve health, allowing patients to heal more quickly.

An emerging movement in the design field called "evidence-based design" catalogs many of these interventions and asks that increased research and thought be brought to environmental effects on health and healing. From this movement, suggestions emerge for how interior interventions can go a long way to focus buildings and environments on their direct impact on patients' and caregivers' health.

It is, however, only in the last paragraph where Manandhar and Buick touch on the continual vexing problem of this approach. In stating that what is needed is "a holistic approach," they touch on the real problem with our medical facilities today: byzantine amalgamations of different designs smashed together into an uncomfortable, disparate collection of spaces. These disparate facilities are difficult to navigate, make the administrative structure less transparent and approachable, and elevate the stress of visiting a hospital—all in all, lowering the quality of care. The state of our current medical facilities is the opposite of holistic, and without a complete redesign, important but surface interventions—such as the better carpeting and better infection control that Manandhar and Buick cite—will help but not go far enough to change the way our hospitals and medical spaces can actually help us heal.

MICHAEL MURPHY AND ALAN RICKS
MASS Design Group
Boston/Rwanda

Mollica Manandhar and Paula Buick effectively describe how noisy hospital environments actually harm the health and well-being of patients, families, and staff. From Florence Nightingale to today, they show how noise has become a major health hazard.

As the president and CEO of Rady Children's Hospital in San Diego for 26 years, I saw firsthand the positive impacts of evidence-based physical design. It is encouraging to see the increasing number of published articles that document the impact of interventions such as larger single-patient rooms, which reduce the incidence of healthcare-acquired infections; wider bathroom doors, which reduce patient falls; appropriate task lighting in medication dispensing areas, which reduces medication-related errors; hydraulic ceiling lifts in patient rooms and bathrooms, which reduce patient and staff lift injuries; and art and music, which reduce anxiety and depression, and speed recovery.

The good news: Hospitals are realizing the importance of negative environmental factors such as noise and clutter. Since 2008, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (the federal agency that administers Medicare, Medicaid, and the State Children's Health Insurance Program) has required hospitals to give all Medicare patients the opportunity to complete a Health Care Attitude and Patient Preference Survey about their care experience. Hospitals that are rated higher by patients will do better in the marketplace. This could be a game changer.

Congratulations to the authors for effectively making the case for reducing harm through reducing noise and clutter in healthcare settings. I believe that whether patients are in our care for an hour, a day, a week, or a year, they deserve an optimal healing environment. Increasingly, they are demanding it.

BLAIR L. SADLER
Institute for Healthcare Improvement
La Jolla, California

***ArchitectureBoston*'s "Listen" issue** was slipped silently into my mail slot. It didn't beep on my iPad or vibrate on my hip. I flipped through it (a gentle sound, accompanied by pleasant air movement and a distinct aroma) before placing it in my laptop case, where it sat quietly waiting for the weekend. When the time was right, I sat alone in insulated isolation and absorbed its careful contents. Without fanfare, it brought me inside musical instruments, allowed me to eavesdrop on cogent conversations, and alerted me to important information. In a world where competing interests vie constantly to drown one another out, thank you for reminding me of the importance of listening.

VERNON WOODWORTH AIA
AKF Group
Boston

With so many wonderful things happening at the Boston Society of Architects lately, I now have to add the latest issue of *ArchitectureBoston* to the list. In her inaugural letter to readers, editor Renée Loth quotes the challenge given to young reporters at *The Boston Globe*: "Make love to the city every day." I must say the quality of the learning on offer throughout *ArchitectureBoston*—the big ideas, the small ideas, the lasting images, the palpable love of places and spaces—demonstrates a similar commitment. Celebrating such ranging interests is an essential ingredient for stimulating broader interest in architecture. But I'm beginning to wonder if we readers are pulling our fair weight.

In rereading Loth's comment, I thought about HBO's *The Wire*, and how much affection for Baltimore the show instilled in its viewers. I can't count how many times I've recommended that series to friends and acquaintances, many of whose

preferences in television drama I know nothing about.

My next thought: Have I ever zealously recommended a read like *ArchitectureBoston* to friends outside the industry? Why not earmark my favorite selections and place them into new hands to enjoy and consider more fully? It would take me five seconds, and help deplete the stack that forever piles up on my desk from all corners of the country.

After all, how many times have we sat in the lobbies of our offices and seen these publications fanned out across our coffee tables, spines unbroken? Surely, I can be a better ambassador than that. I suspect I'm not alone.

MICHAEL WOOD
Association of Architecture Organizations
Chicago

With reference to your recent article on hidden acoustical techniques ["Bring On Da Noise!"], Autodesk was able to deploy a unique technology we affectionately call "pink noise" in our Waltham offices. During project design, there was extensive (and often heated) conversation about the height of the 300 workstations that comprise most of our workspace for our software engineers, marketers, and other staff. Our integrated project delivery team was trying to strike the necessary balance between our desire for open, collaborative space that met LEED daylighting requirements (suggesting very low partitions) versus the need for peace and quiet necessary for the exacting work of software development. Some of our engineers, reminding me that their work was akin to "the hardest math problem you ever did in high school," suggested that the only solution was to provide offices—with doors.

When Carl Bass, our CEO and a former software developer himself, declared low partitioned workstations as our corporate standard, we looked for other answers. Thus came our "pink noise" system, which is similar to white-noise sound masking, but tuned specifically to the frequencies of the human voice. After extensive computer modeling and work with our acoustic engineers, we installed an advanced audio system with 240 speakers deployed on the three open floors of our office and operated through our digital building management system. In combination with carefully chosen carpet and acoustic treatment for our open-deck ceiling, we've created an open, collaborative, but suitably quiet office.

On a recent April Fool's Day, one of our teams decided to "test" our system—by deactivating it. Within minutes, our staff was distracted by what they thought was some sort of HVAC failure and upon learning of the trick was none too pleased as work came to a noisy halt. Our success in Waltham means that we now use these systems in all new Autodesk offices.

PHIL BERNSTEIN FAIA
Autodesk, Inc.
Waltham, Massachusetts

There must be something to this whole "listen" thing. After quickly flipping through *ArchitectureBoston*'s Summer 2012 issue, I decided to submit my work playlist—songs that get me amped up and one to calm me down—on architectureboston.com:

1. "Jigsaw Falling Into Place," Radiohead
2. "Flying Overseas," Theophilus London
3. "Heavy Vibes," Vibraphonic
4. "Never Stop," The Brand New Heavies
5. "Aisha," John Coltrane

A few minutes later, as if it were fate, a guy who blogs for Herman Miller asked to feature me on their Lifework page (www.hermanmiller.com/lifework/category/balance), talking about my work and my work music playlist—so exciting! Thank you, *ArchitectureBoston*!

AISHA DENSMORE-BEY, ASSOC. AIA
Boston

We want to hear from you. Letters on any topic relating to the built environment may be sent to letters@architectureboston.com or sent to *ArchitectureBoston*, 290 Congress Street, Suite 200, Boston, MA 02110. Letters may be edited for clarity and length, and must include your name, address, and daytime telephone number. Length should not exceed 300 words.

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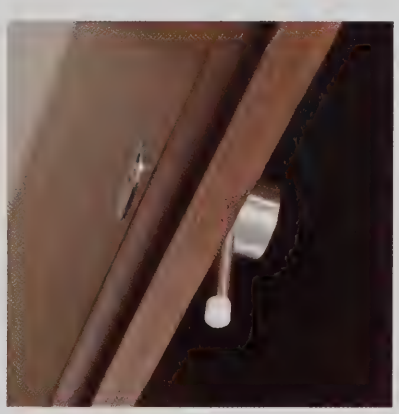
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PHOTO: June Lee

Jane **Whitehead**
("Forget Me Not," page 26)
Jane Whitehead is a British-born writer based in Massachusetts. Her features, essays, and profiles have appeared in *The Boston Globe*, *The Horn Book Magazine*, and many area alumni journals, including *BC Law Magazine*.

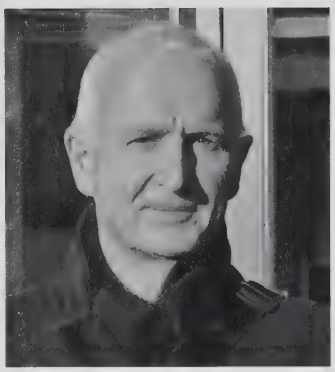


PHOTO: Rebecca Murray

Hubert **Murray** FAIA
("Pulverizing the Past," page 30)
Hubert Murray FAIA is manager of sustainable initiatives for Partners HealthCare. In an international career, he has concentrated on campus planning and urban design of major infrastructure projects, including Boston's Central Artery.



PHOTO: Kelly Smith

Chris **Grimley**
("Fauxstalgia," page 34)
Chris Grimley is a principal at over,under, a design practice in Boston. The firm's most recent exhibit, *Let's Talk About Bikes*, is on display at BSA Space through August 31, 2012.



PHOTO: B.D. Colen

Karen **Weintraub**
("Memory Palaces," page 52)
Karen Weintraub is a Cambridge-based health and science journalist. In addition to writing for *The Boston Globe*, *USA Today*, and the BBC.com, she teaches journalism at Boston University. She is co-author of *The Autism Revolution* (Random House, March 2012).



PHOTO: Patrick Garçon

Julian **Bonder,** ASSOC. AIA and Krzysztof **Wodiczko**
("Conversation," page 46)
Julian Bonder, ASSOC. AIA (right), principal of Julian Bonder + Associates, was born in New York and raised in Argentina. He is an active contributor to the international discourse on memory, public space, cultural trauma, and monument design, often working outside the traditional boundaries of architecture. He is professor of architecture at Roger Williams University.

Krzysztof Wodiczko (left) is a Polish-born artist best known for his large-scale projections on public buildings and spaces in more than 70 cities worldwide. He is professor of art, design, and the public domain at Harvard's Graduate School of Design. He is recipient of the 1999 Hiroshima Prize for his contribution as an artist to world peace, and he was selected to represent Poland in the 2009 Venice Biennale.

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Karolina Kawiaka AIA is an architect in Vermont and teaches architecture at Dartmouth College.

ABOVE
Edward Burtynsky, *Rock of Ages #7, Active Granite Section, Wells-Lamson Quarry, Barre, Vermont, 1991.* Courtesy Howard Greenberg & Bryce Wolkowitz, New York/ Nicholas Metivier, Toronto.

Nature Transformed: Edward Burtynsky's Vermont Quarry Photographs in Context

Hood Museum of Art
Hanover, New Hampshire
April 1–August 19, 2012

In the 1990s, Canadian photographer Edward Burtynsky began to document what he called "the reverse of the skyscraper." He found in the verdant Vermont landscape the massive open wounds left where deposits of fine granites and marbles had been quarried by generations of immigrant workers. The result of their efforts—dimensional stone—helped to define our culture's quest to create timeless architecture and monuments.

Burtynsky is known for using photography, often images of startling juxtapositions and excess, to comment on the relationship between human industry and the environment. The large-scale, gorgeous color prints currently on view at the Hood Museum of Art include seven never shown before. They immerse the viewer viscerally in the extreme beauty and violence of quarrying. The photographs also lead us to meditate on the local human and economic implications of the lapse of this industry in rural Vermont and the fact that it is less expensive to purchase imported stone at Home Depot than to support our local economies. We are left to contemplate our relationship to the working landscape, its wonderful and terrible beauty, and how it endures, even as we finally begin to question that truth and our role in it as architects and consumers.

This exhibition will also be on display at the Middlebury College Museum of Art in Middlebury, Vermont, February 8–April 21, 2013.

Rob Trumbour AIA teaches architecture at Wentworth Institute of Technology and is founder of Artforming, a design and research collaborative.

RIGHT
Michael Lin, *FreePort [No. 005].* Courtesy the Peabody Essex Museum.

FreePort [No. 005]

The Peabody Essex Museum
Salem, Massachusetts
March 22, 2012–May 27, 2013

Is meaning imbued by the vessel, by its maker, or by the contents within? Evoking the contained space of the porcelain vessels scattered throughout the Peabody Essex Museum's (PEM's) Asian Export Art wing, this installation by artist Michael Lin asks more questions than it answers.

Lin's painted wall surfaces surround visitors with a series of anonymous silhouettes on the PEM's Mellon Staircase. He inverts the traditional relationship between object and viewer as the spiral stair transcends its conventional identity and becomes a large vessel itself, providing an unexpected view from within.

Lin's work provokes questions of cultural value, meaning, and the relevance of authorship surrounding the making of objects. With the advent of mass customization and machine-automated production, is the hand of the author needed in the formation of meaning, or can it exist in anonymity? As we all are participants in a consumer culture situated in an ever-expanding global marketplace, Lin's questions are timely and necessary.



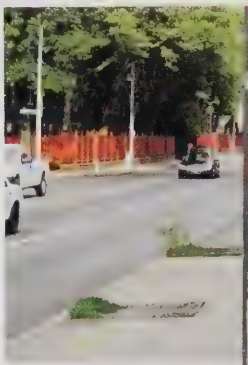
Considered

"Hi." This simple greeting welcomed people to the often overlooked edges of Boston's South End, inviting them to look again at a place they might otherwise pass by. These cast concrete letters were a temporary public art installation deployed during this year's Common Boston festival in June.

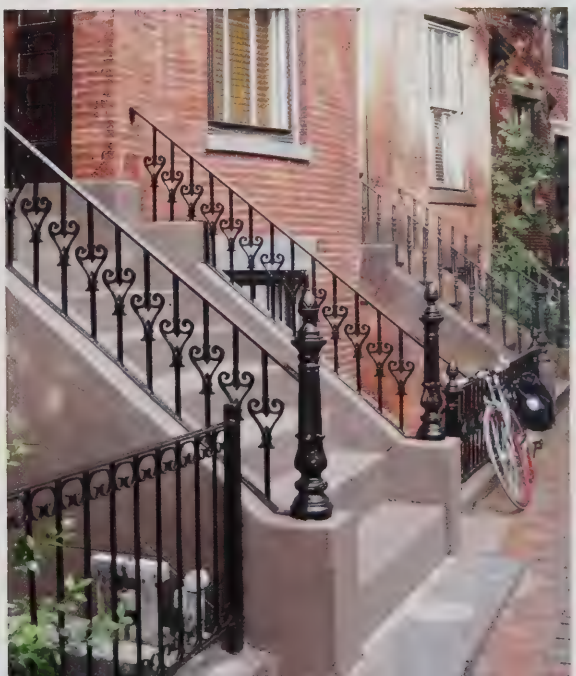












Common Boston—an annual 10-day celebration of architecture, design, and community—focuses on different "common points" every year. This year's festival explored Downtown, Mattapan, the Emerald Necklace, and the South End.

For more photos, visit architectureboston.com

Hi was an installation by Kathi McFarland Bahr, Rosie Weinberg, and Natalie Zanecchia. Photos by Mary Hale



Ahead

Palaces for the People: Guastavino and America's Great Public Spaces
Boston Public Library, Copley Square
September 28, 2012–February 24, 2013

John Ochsendorf is a structural engineer and professor at MIT. He is the author of *Guastavino Vaulting: The Art of Structural Tile* (2010), and lead curator of the upcoming exhibit, *Palaces for the People*.

RIGHT
Guastavino tile vaults at City Hall Subway Station, New York City. Photo: Michael Freeman.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
www.guastavino.net

Guastavino tile vaults graced the interiors of hundreds of North American buildings in the late-19th and early-20th centuries, including major national landmarks such as the Boston Public Library (BPL). Renowned for their durability and beauty, the compound curves of Guastavino vaulting have impressed architects, builders, and the general public for more than 100 years.

Rafael Guastavino Moreno and his son, Rafael Guastavino Exposito, emigrated from Barcelona in 1881 and then contributed to the design and construction of more than 1,000 major buildings across the United States, including university buildings, churches, museums, and railroad stations. By the turn of the 20th century, the Guastavino name was known to every major architect and construction firm in America. Today, millions of people pass through and marvel at these great public spaces each year, but few know that a single immigrant family helped to create them.

The BPL's upcoming exhibition on the Guastavino Company and its architectural legacy will use new color photography, historical artifacts, and interactive multimedia to encourage visitors to raise their eyes to these extraordinary Spanish-tile vaults. A full-scale reconstruction of a Guastavino vault will offer a hands-on understanding of the technique, and a new website will allow users to identify and contribute content on Guastavino buildings around the country. In addition, a one-day symposium on Guastavino vaulting will be held at MIT on November 3, 2012. After closing in Boston, the exhibit will then travel to the National Building Museum in Washington, DC, and the Museum of the City of New York in the spring and fall of 2013.

Looking Backward

Gretchen Schneider AIA is the executive director of the Community Design Resource Center and the deputy editor of *ArchitectureBoston*.

RIGHT
The Prudential Center, 1968. Courtesy Boston City Archives.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
architectureboston.com

Garnering neither the admiration of the Hancock tower nor the hatred of City Hall (its geographic and contemporary neighbors, respectively), Boston's Prudential tower is perhaps a fitting image for an insurance company: solid, ever-present, uncontroversial.

According to architectural historian Elihu Rubin, author of *Insuring the City: The Prudential Center and the Postwar Urban Landscape*, the Pru marked a transformative moment in Boston's history. This 1965 complex was a key piece in the transition from a downtown, rail-based economy to a regional, automobile-driven network; reflects the rise of corporate influence in city making; and represented a radical, conscious effort to invest in the urban center.

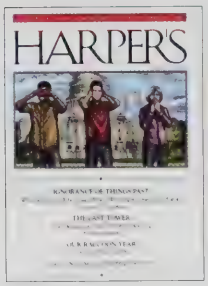


Boston in 1965 was a much different place than it is today. The city had suffered economically, as surrounding textile and manufacturing industries moved south, and many urban thinkers believed that the aging, dense, pedestrian-oriented 19th-century building fabric was obsolete.

With the 52-story Prudential building, city fathers sent a very different signal. And catalyzed by this investment and other projects like it, Boston successfully navigated the transition to a vibrant, postindustrial economy. Too many New England cities have not.

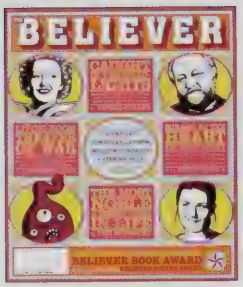
Large projects such as the Pru that played roles in that transition have rarely been loved. Yet a spate of recent exhibitions, newspaper coverage, and lectures suggest that Boston is ready to rethink its midcentury. There may be something in the zeitgeist, or at least a younger generation of architects and historians—who didn't live through the destruction that the era also embraced—may be more open to appreciating its heroic aims and success.

The Prudential Center bears lessons in its architectural approach, as well, as the buildings at the base continue to evolve as the city around it changes. This ongoing recalibration is something that Boston City Hall has never been able to do.









NEXT AMERICAN CITY

Covering the Issues

Gretchen Schneider AIA is the executive director of the Community Design Resource Center and the deputy editor of *ArchitectureBoston*.

If you lived here... In the 1950s and 1960s, many neighborhoods were demolished to create public housing. Over the past decade, many of those large housing projects have met the wrecking ball, too. In "The Last Tower: The Decline and Fall of Public Housing" (***Harper's***, May 2012), Ben Austen examines the most infamous public-housing complex, and the most ambitious wholesale transformations: Chicago's Cabrini-Green. As Jane Jacobs once described the social networks in "slums" such as Boston's North End, Austen talks with people displaced by public housing's demise, shedding light on the important support systems that have now been fractured. The unrealized promise of public housing has been followed by the unrealized promise of its renewal.

Apocalypse soon... ***Popular Science*** presents a series of articles on "Building a Better World" (July 2012). A few moments induce pause, such as the suggestion that New York City's—and Boston's—subways are more than 100 years old; a century from now, much of these systems will be underwater. Similarly, if global warming continues at the present rate, "half of Earth's currently occupied land [will be] uninhabitable" by 2300. Much of the architectural territory is familiar: plan for sea-level rise now, urban density and mixed use is good, smaller dwellings are needed. But did you know that climate scientists receive regular death threats? Sadly, political scare tactics have entered the realm of science. Their work is more necessary today than ever.

London calling... In one of many special reports to coincide with this summer's Olympics, ***The Economist***'s "On a High; London's Precarious Brilliance" (June 30–July 6, 2012) explores the intersection of money and policy; of transportation, demographics, and housing. The editors argue that London, radically reinvigorated since its doldrum days a generation ago, is presently the most dynamic city in Europe. Meanwhile, planes, trains, and automobiles flood infrastructure past capacity, while local preservation policies help make housing even more expensive. What will the post-Olympic years bring? Although the long-term viability of facilities like the velodrome is unclear, even larger questions surround the everyday built environment. The editors make an impassioned call for close attention to the effect of national British policy on local urban centers.

It's a mad, mad world... Futurama, the General Motors–sponsored utopian vision at the 1939 New York World's Fair, included "'floating' airports," "radio-controlled traffic," and 500,000 miniature buildings in the largest animated model ever built to the tune of $91 million (in today's dollars). In "Colossal in Scale, Appalling in Complexity; Norman Bel Geddes and the Surprising Genesis of the Most Iconic World's Fair Exhibit of All Time" (***The Believer***, May 2012), B. Alexandra Szerlip explains that a young sick-at-home designer created a miniature, operating race track on his drafting board as an amusement, which quickly grew into a wildly popular weekly parlor game in Geddes' basement, complete with real betting and visits by the likes of Charlie Chaplin and Ethel Barrymore. Geddes' War Game followed and, eventually, the World's Fair, in this odd, obsessive, truly fantastic tale of man and model.

Reboot... ***Next American City*** has been reinvented as an online-only journal, with *Forefront* as its new flagship long-form essay series, updated weekly, and a daily blog. Josh Stevens launched issue one with "Out of Cash: The End of the Nation's Largest Redevelopment Program" (posted April 13, 2012), an investigation into the demise of redevelopment funding in California. (The Boston Redevelopment Authority's funding is entirely different, but the discussion around runaway power and insufficient oversight sounds familiar.) Marked by thoughtful, thorough reporting, *Forefront* has so far touched on issues from the transformation of Rio's favelas to Providence, Rhode Island, after the highway to smart growth in Wyoming. Noticeably more comprehensive and lively than its quarterly print predecessor, *Next American City* may finally become an influential urban voice.

Takuma Ono in Conversation With Charles Waldheim

Gardner Museum Landscape Lectures
Boston
June 7, 2012

"C'est Mon Plaisir" reads the motto above the Gardner Museum entrance. Although a century has passed since Isabella Stewart Gardner organized window-box contests on Beacon Hill—spreading her public spirit through healthy rivalry—her memory has inspired a new biennial competition seeking to stretch the bounds of landscape architecture in the public realm. Led by Charles Waldheim, chair of the landscape architecture department at the Harvard Graduate School of Design (GSD), the jury for the new Maeder-York Family Fellowship in Landscape Studies at the Gardner Museum found in Takuma Ono an inaugural fellow who shares the museum founder's pleasure in thinking deeply about the needs of the public and crafting unexpected environments in response.

Fittingly, Ono was brought into a conversation with the public before the end of his first week in residence. Modest and reflective, he presented the work and research of his firm, Aershop, through informational graphics composed with beauty and clarity. Ono also shares with Gardner a perspective shaped by world travel, which has led him to a focus on large-scale environmental interventions in collaboration with Aershop co-founder Darina Zlateva. In a proposal to restore the Los Angeles River, for example, the partners demonstrated a new approach to reverting an ailing waterway into a vibrant destination through a de-centralization of wastewater treatment. No dream is too big for Ono and Zlateva, who met while studying at the GSD. They tackle challenges with what would seem like wild abandon, if not for the thorough research behind their dramatic conclusions.

Will a process-oriented digital designer be affected by residing with a collection of objects created through slower methods of representation, and in living quarters designed by Renzo Piano, master of reducing complex performance to visual simplicity? Ono will spend his three-month residency investigating methods of reusing dredged material from Boston Harbor to address the issue of rising sea-water levels. Having demonstrated a talent for flipping sites in environmental crisis into recreational venues for enjoying the outdoors, this fellowship is a promising gift to the city. Situated for its connection to the Emerald Necklace, the Gardner museum seems an apt birthplace for the next major work of landscape architecture in Boston.

Amelia Thrall, ASSOC. AIA is a designer and educator living in Cambridge, Massachusetts.





What does it mean to know a thing "by heart"? Childhood songs, the steps in a favorite recipe, the road home—we encode these in our memories through sheer repetition but also by their attendant emotions: comfort and joy, anger or sorrow. We asked five writers to describe a building, place, or object that evokes a powerful association and how it might inform their lives and work. Proust would understand.

madeleine moments





Contemporary artists designed these evocative works for the Sculpture Path, an open-air museum at Forest Hills Cemetery in Boston. Photo series: Jonathan Kozowyk

LEFT TO RIGHT
Leslie Wilcox, *Nightshirts*, 2002, painted stainless steel screen.

Susan Ferrari-Rowley, *Spirit Vessels*, 1998, stainless steel with poly-fiber coatings.

Fern Cunningham, *The Sentinel*, 2003, bronze.

SMALL CRAFT ADVISORY by Keith Moskow FAIA

I was just out of architecture school when I first saw the canoe hanging in the old American Craft Museum on 53rd Street in New York. It was constructed of a wooden skeletal body and a translucent skin, and it hung above you so you could see through it. There was nothing special about the museum space—the room might even have had a dropped acoustical tile ceiling—but the canoe had a luminous quality, like a Japanese lantern. That transparency, that glow, is a strong theme for me and all of us at our firm. We often look for ways to incorporate that into our work.

The canoe brought back memories of the wilderness trips I had taken as a boy in Northern Ontario. The base camp, situated in North Bay, served as an outfitting station for extended trips into the wilderness, some as long as seven weeks. The trip locations were on remote rivers and boundary waters. Often, the only other people you would encounter were Native Americans, known in Canada as First Nations. The canoes were wood and canvas and often needed to be repaired; tumplines for portaging were leather; tents, canvas. I took these trips for only three summers, but very influential ones.

I thought at one point that I was going to be a boat builder. I liked working with my hands and putting things together. I took a semester off from school and set up a shop in my folks' garage and built Carolina Dories. I had carpentry experience from summer jobs. Boat building was quite a bit more challenging—and rewarding. But it's a solitary pursuit, and I realized I wanted something more interactive. Still, building boats taught me about the tectonics of curvilinear forms.

Seeing that canoe struck a chord with my experience. Knowing the complexity and the difficulty of building these wooden boats was one thing, but then it had that glow. It was elevated to an art form in that second reading, like a Picasso skeleton of a fish, or a structure by Santiago Calatrava—his bridges of what appear to be big, bleached white bones.

In a well-designed, well-crafted wood and canvas canoe, every piece is critical. No piece is superfluous. The structure itself becomes a beauty. Sitting in a wood and canvas canoe you see the ribs, you see the thwarts, you see what's created it. It's the reduction to that structure and materiality that makes it quite wonderful.

Keith Moskow FAIA is a partner at Moskow Linn Architects. The firm designed and built the 9/11 Memorial at Logan International Airport.



LEFT TO RIGHT
Danielle Krcmar and Lisa Osborn, *Resting Benches*, 2001, concrete and steel.

Danielle Krcmar in collaboration with Derek Brain, *Things Worth Remembering*, 2004, steel, cement, china pieces, found and donated objects.

Ruth Gembicki Bragg and Madeleine Lord, *Seers*, 1995, cut steel.

THE ARCHITECTURE OF TIME

by Anita Diamant

Anita Diamant has written 12 books, including the international bestseller *The Red Tent*. She is an award-winning journalist and author of six nonfiction guides to contemporary Jewish life.

Milestone is an old word, as solid as a pillar marking distances along an old post road. In contemporary use, the meaning is temporal; a milestone is a significant event, the beginning or end of a stage in life—the stuff of memory.

I was married in the sanctuary of Congregation Beth El of the Sudbury River Valley—the same place my baby daughter was named, became bat mitzvah at 13, and graduated from the temple high school program. It is the only place she can imagine her own wedding.

I've been in that room for 30 years' worth of holiday observances. I've wept at the funerals of friends there. I laughed and sung and studied there. On occasion, I've sat alone and savored an unusual but comfortable silence.

According to the fire marshal, 240 people are permitted in the sanctuary at any given time, but there is no legal limit on the number of memories. Sometimes when I walk in, I feel embraced by the past; other times, ambushed.

This has nothing to do with the temple's architecture, which is unassuming, even artless. Beth El was built in 1970 by a local prefab construction company at a cost of $135,000. The sanctuary's best feature is the vaulted ceiling, 25 feet at its peak, made of bare wooden planks stained a dark walnut color. It looks like an inverted boat and makes me think of Noah's ark, which landed well. I remember someone looking up and making the imaginative leap to another biblical vessel: the waterproof basket that floated baby Moses down the Nile.

The west-facing windows look out on a meditation garden dedicated to remembrance; inside the names of our dead are etched on panes of frosted glass the size of business cards and displayed in a white wooden lattice near the altar, the bimah.

The custom of placing stones on a loved one's grave is reprised within the grid by a supply of polished black pebbles. I place one beside my father's name on the anniversary of his death and whenever I want to draw closer to his memory. A few spaces above, my friend's infant son is memorialized, his untimely death a family tragedy that becomes fungible and communal in the company of this congregation.

The word "remember" appears 169 times in the Torah, the first five books of the Hebrew Bible. For Jews, the methodology of remembering is ritual, which Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel described as "the art of significant forms in time, as architecture of time." Passover rehearses the story of Exodus to make that memory personal in every generation. The annual tributes to loved ones gone recall entire lifetimes.

The sanctuary is redolent with sense memory; the smell of warming casseroles, the taste of a hundred thousand bagels, the press of handshakes and hugs, the echoes of spontaneous harmonies, the afterglow of smiles from my groom, my daughter, my father, and 240-plus faces who remember me.





UNEARTHING THE FUTURE by Dan Hisel AIA

Moss-green scales cover the back and sides of the fearsome beast, and white armor plates protect his belly. He has short, powerful legs; a long tail; and regal wings that extend back from his shoulders. Red nostrils flare with warning. But it's the terrifying, fiery red eyes that hold you under his spell. The eyes, and the deep scar on his upper lip. The scar is my fault. I think my shovel hit him in the face before I knew he was there.

It was a blistering summer day in the humid hills of central Kentucky when I first did battle with the dragon. At the time, I didn't know what I was up against. It turned out to be nothing less than a talisman of fate—a companion to guide me through my life of becoming an architect.

I was down in a ditch, wielding a shovel. I was 16, maybe 17. The ground was being stubborn. The sweat was getting in my eyes. I was frustrated. And thirsty. *What the hell am I doing here? I should be at the pool!* But no, my old man had dragged me out of bed at some ungodly hour, shoved a pair of boots at me, and taken me to work on one of his construction crews. As my shovel flailed at the unyielding earth, something bright green and white appeared from the clods. Hmmm. What could this be?

I *really* didn't want to be there, digging footers (as we called them). Had I known I would end up as an architect, I might have been able to see past the oppressive conditions of the moment to the larger lessons about soil-bearing capacity, or some such thing. But my dad was an architect, with a design/build company. Still is, actually. So I might have been in a rebellious state of mind. But then the little green dragon emerged out of the ground, and now he sits here on my desk, laughing at me, as if to say "See, everything relates. Everything ties together."

Sometimes the right things in life just rise out of the ground and stay with you whether you choose them or not. You find them, wonder about them for a while, and then (sometimes) put them to use. This toy rubber dragon reminds me that things I heartily detested then would become the very things I would spend the rest of my life doing.

Sixteen years later I was down in a ditch again, digging the footings for the Cadyville Sauna in upstate New York, a small structure I built mostly by myself on a cliff above the Saranac River. And it started with footings. No drawings, no plans, just an incredible site and a vague idea. As I think about it now, the beneficent green dragon had come back to me, to breathe fire into that little hot room and steam up the glass.

Dan Hisel AIA is an architect from Lexington, Kentucky, who now lives in Lexington, Massachusetts. He has a practice in Arlington and teaches design at Wentworth Institute of Technology.







ALL WE KNOW OF HEAVEN by Max Page

Max Page is a professor of architecture at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst and author, most recently, of *Reconsidering Jane Jacobs* (Planners Press, edited with Timothy Mennel)

Apologies to architects: Memory often does not demand a designer, other than the individual mind. The most powerful sites of personal memory are often the anonymous places made full of meaning by an individual. Such is the case with one of the more forgettable corners in an unforgettable town.

On your way to see the Emily Dickinson Homestead, where the poet once drew for inspiration on her own "old Grounds of memory," you would be forgiven for walking right by the dusty northwest corner of the Amherst town common, next to an ill-conceived parking lot bitten out of the grassy rectangle, otherwise nobly framed by the buildings of Amherst College on one end and the Richardsonian town hall at the other.

But for me, looking down at this ragged edge of the Amherst town common is like peering into a Technicolor well, rippling with my own past.

It was in 1966 that the Amherst Common Peace Vigil began, running on Sundays from noon to 1:00 PM without fail into the early 1970s, making it one of the longest-running protests against the Vietnam War. The tradition has waxed and waned, but to this day, our own version of Hyde Park Speakers' Corner draws antiwar protestors to make their plea to passing motorists and pedestrians.

I see myself there, on my father's shoulders, as he strolled back and forth, smiling, with a pipe in his mouth, no doubt. The image I have is from across the street, so it may be a memory constructed from family stories, and those black-and-white photographs stuck into the fat albums that line my childhood home. Memory is no "sacred Closet" as Emily called it (all of us from Amherst are on a first-name basis with the poet), where memory is a solid object that rests unchanging, if gathering dust. Memory is more like the "reverential Broom" she mused about, whisking words and images, sounds and smells together to construct an emotion-filled scene.

My memory of sitting atop my father's shoulders—the shoulders that are now a visibly old 89 years of age—is not something that has resonated forever, with a consistent, kryptonite glow. No, this memory site has waxed in power, as my father has declined and as my own activism has grown. This memory gives me both my father back—at the height of his full, ebullient life—and a foundation for my own political efforts today.

I was told a few years back that the town had placed a memorial plaque in the ground. But I could never find it, until one day I saw it, covered in dusty dirt. It seemed a shame, like no one cared to keep the plaque clean. But now it strikes me that this is as innovative a memorial as I could imagine: It is visible only if there are people, marching and protesting, kicking up dirt and awakening outrage, reminding us why we find ourselves at this very spot, still working to heal a broken world.





LEFT TO RIGHT
Mitch Ryerson, *Gateway Bench*, 2004, ipé, copper, yellow pine.

Charles Jones, *Vent/018*, 2003–2004, fabricated and cast steel.

George Sherwood, *Flock of Birds*, 2000, stainless steel.

Kahlil Gibran, *Into the Millennium*, 1999, bronze.

MY BACK PAGES by Susan Trausch

The pull of the sea, the woods, and the wild places with no bricks or steel is timeless and sets me free. Nature invites me in, a guest, to stay as long as the light holds. But there are certain buildings where the draw is even stronger, precisely because they are locked in time. We share history that melds brick, steel, and soul, and will never let me go. Nor would I want it to.

Standing on St. Stephen Street in Boston, looking up at the gray stone apartment house that passersby barely notice, I feel the pulse quicken in anticipation of encountering a younger self. Surely she lives there still, that 25-year-old Ohio girl with the waist-long hair and second-hand guitar. She's starting a new life in the fifth floor studio with the bay windows and noisy, unreliable steam heat. She's typing a freelance newspaper article on an electric typewriter set on a borrowed desk. She'll have Kraft macaroni and cheese mixed with hotdogs for dinner, and then sit in a yellow beanbag chair to read under the Woolworth's pole lamp. The beans will crunch as she turns the pages.

I want to go in and ring her buzzer, but reality would snap the spell. I stay suspended between 1970 and the present, listening to the Huntington Avenue trolleys clanging just as they have for so many years.

At a Weymouth gym in a space with all the charm of an airplane hangar, it's the commanding smack of tennis balls meeting strings that holds me willing prisoner to memory. I stand at the lobby window looking out on the courts and feel the racquet, the sweat, and the way frustration replaces exhilaration in seconds. I squint at the far court. Yes, it's my husband and I, playing against the killer couple. We run flat out, come to shoe-squealing stops, and slam the ball for winners. It is 1990, and we believe knees last forever.

I do water aerobics now and visit a chiropractor in the gym's physical therapy area. But I cannot pass the lobby window without playing at least one long point.

I live in a house that is 20 minutes from the gym and holds 25 years of memories. It doesn't make me ache quite so much for the past because change has come slowly here, day by day. But the tiny rooms, low ceilings, and Harvest Gold kitchen can trigger a kind of nostalgia in reverse, an ache for the day when the gray-shingled ranch will belong to someone else—someone who could easily tear it down and replace it with a monument to modern tastes.

I see myself coming back to haunt whatever is there and maybe getting up enough nerve to ring the doorbell. The vision is a reminder to open the eyes wider and treasure my Formica, to always embrace now before it turns into then.

Susan Trausch, a former *Boston Globe* staff writer, is the author of *Groping Toward Whatever or How I Learned to Retire (Sort Of)*, published by Free Street Press.


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AND SERIOUSLY GIFTED
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FORGET ME NOT

The shifting landscape of public remembrance

BY JANE WHITEHEAD



It's a park, a gift, a place of remembrance. Just don't call it a memorial, says Donald Tellalian, architect and designer of the Armenian Heritage Park on Boston's Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway.

Tellalian's circumspection springs from a 12-year journey to create the park, in which an original idea for a memorial to the Armenian victims of mass killings by Ottoman Turks during and after World War I ultimately was realized in the form of an urban respite that celebrates all immigrants' contributions to American life. "For many years, we just couldn't get this project on track," said Peter J. Koutoujian, Sheriff of Middlesex County and honorary chair of the Armenian Heritage Foundation Executive Committee, at the rain-soaked dedication of the park on May 22 this year.

As the story of one community's emotionally driven, tenacious promotion of a contested memorial, the Armenian Heritage Park saga resonates with contemporary currents in 21st-century memorial making in terms of subject matter, motivation, and design vocabulary. It is a tale of how flexibility, persistence—and a significant dollop of private money—propelled a controversial project through a thicket of objections to get sited, designed, and built.

As with many things in Massachusetts, politics played a key role. In 2000, Koutoujian, then a state representative, sponsored a bill with a provision directing what was then the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority to study the feasibility of constructing "a monument to the Armenian Genocide of 1915–22." No location was specified, but by August 2006, a coalition of 37 community groups calling itself the Armenian Heritage Foundation had an initial agreement with the Turnpike Authority to develop an awkward half-acre parcel on the Greenway, between Quincy Market and Christopher Columbus Park.

But as *The Boston Globe* reported, even after the proposal had been given the go-ahead in principle by the Mayor's Central Artery Completion Task Force and the Boston Redevelopment Authority, the memorial issue remained "highly charged." Opponents claimed the special legislation bypassed the competitive design process for other parcels on the Greenway. Boston Mayor Thomas Menino and Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy officials fretted about opening the new 1.5-mile-long urban park to a rash of competing ethnic memorials. It even risked becoming embroiled in the geopolitical debate over whether the slaughter of Armenians should officially be termed a "genocide."

Luckily, the project had in Tellalian a designer who was sensitive to the imperatives of civic space on the Greenway. Starting in 2004, Tellalian, principal architect of the National Heritage Museum in Lexington (while he was at Shepley Bulfinch), convened a committee of 12. They met in members' houses and church basements, sketching a design that would be, in Tellalian's words, neither "Mother Armenia holding the child aloft" nor a *khatchkar* (a stone marker in the form of a cross) in the middle of a grass plot. "This was going to be on public space in downtown Boston, and whatever message or memory it wished to commemorate, it had to be a well designed and welcoming urban space," he said.

It certainly didn't hurt that the foundation was on track to raise more than $6 million in private funds to pay for the park's construction and maintenance, endow a series of lectures on human rights, and fund multicultural programming.

OPPOSITE
Tiles For America, a 9/11 memorial created by children and families around the world, erected on a fence in Greenwich Village, New York City. Photo: Kathryn Steed, 2007.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
See a slideshow of the Armenian Heritage Park at architectureboston.com

Governments have long appealed to memorials as a way to unify diverse populations.

Tellalian's final design has two key elements. A 60-foot-diameter labyrinth of granite pavers, set in a lawn, has a central water jet calibrated to rise or fall according to prevailing wind speeds. In counterpoint to the ground-level labyrinth—an ancient aid to meditation—an abstract sculpture rises 15 feet from a circular reflecting pool in the form of a split dodecahedron, faced with black mirrorlike powder-coated aluminum panels.

The idea for the 12-sided sculpture came from a stacking geometric toy Tellalian found in a gift shop in Rome in the mid-1960s. The shape's property of coming apart and nesting in different configurations seemed



to him a perfect metaphor for immigrants pulled from their birth communities and forced to reshape lives in a new country. To dramatize this dynamic process, the sculpture, which has 32 possible forms, will be re-configured annually.

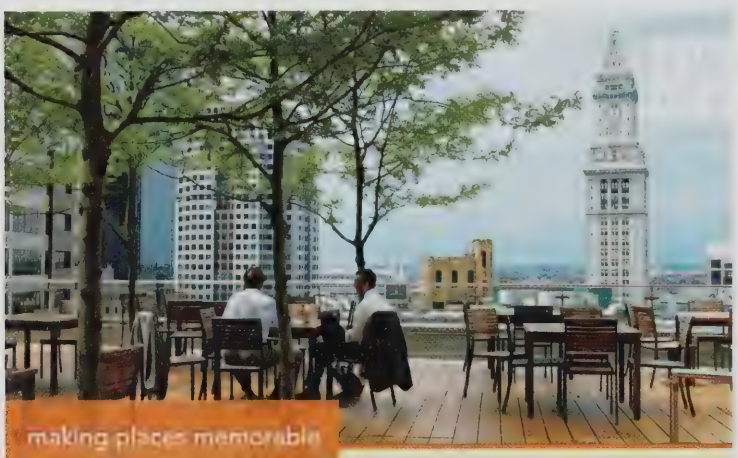
The inscription on the reflecting pool's plinth marks the gift of the park to the people of Massachusetts and the City of Boston from the Commonwealth's Armenian-American community, and honors the 1.5 million victims of the Armenian Genocide and those of subsequent genocides. But it also celebrates "the diversity of the communities that have re-formed in the safety of these shores."

Governments have long appealed to memorials as a way to unify diverse populations, according to James Young, an internationally known authority on Holocaust memorials. The unspoken message: "Remember these things as though they happened to you."

Young, a professor at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst who served on the jury that reviewed more than 5,000 submissions for the National September 11 Memorial at the World Trade Center, believes a successful memorial design should not produce "closure" in the traditional sense. "Memory's an animated, live thing that really depends on being unforeclosed, open to evolution, to change." Contemporary memorial designers, he said, aim to create spaces "for multiple and competing memories, without overdetermining a particular story, a particular narrative."

And memorials have become more democratic over time. "The conventional memorial process often had to do with heroic figures, leaders, generals," said Alan Plattus, professor of architecture and urbanism at Yale University School of Architecture. "Now there are strong constituencies for memorializing a broader range of history—people understand that the cumulative national heritage needs to be more inclusive." Foremost among those groups have been immigrants and African-Americans, he said.

Erika Doss, professor of American Studies at Notre Dame University, has documented a plethora of recent memorials to groups as diverse as executed witches, victims of lynching, and cancer survivors. In her book *Memorial Mania: Public Feeling in America* (reviewed on page 57), she sees a society gripped by "an obsession with issues of memory and history, and an urgent desire to express and claim those issues in visibly public contexts."



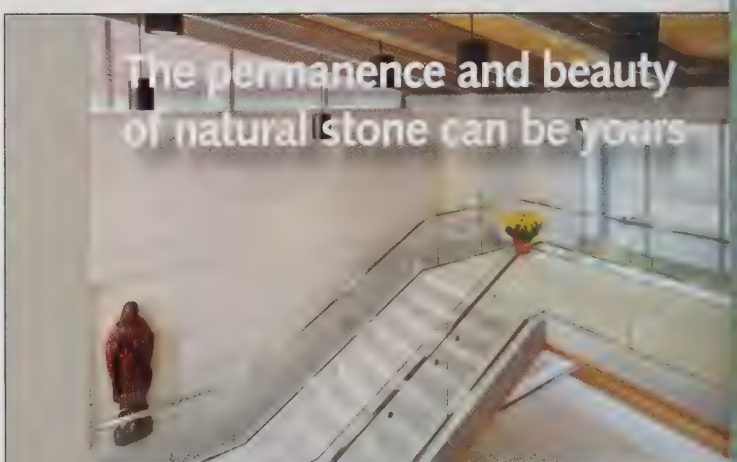

RESPITE

I THINK THAT THE ENVIRONMENT IS ONE VERY STRONG WAY TO COUNTERBALANCE THE CHAOTIC NATURE OF OUR LIVES.

– Minoru Yamasaki

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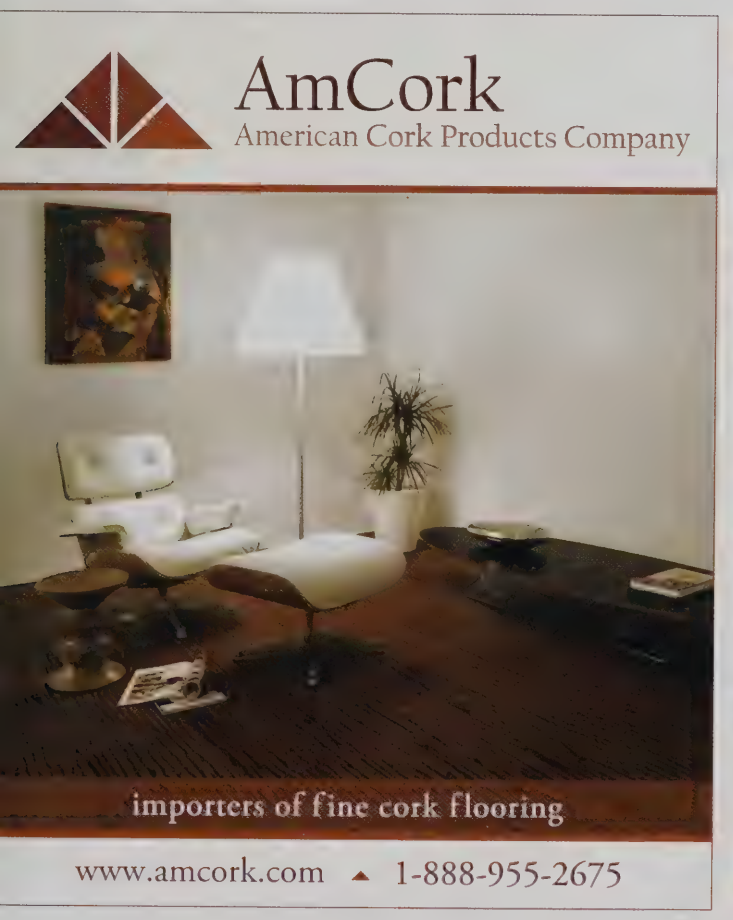
This impulse perhaps found its most vivid expression in the proliferation of local tributes following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. "Every community wanted a 9/11 memorial," said Michele Bogart, professor of visual culture studies at Stony Brook University, who served as a member of what is now the Public Design Commission of the City of New York from 1998–2003. The brief of the commission is to review proposals for any permanent structure on city land.

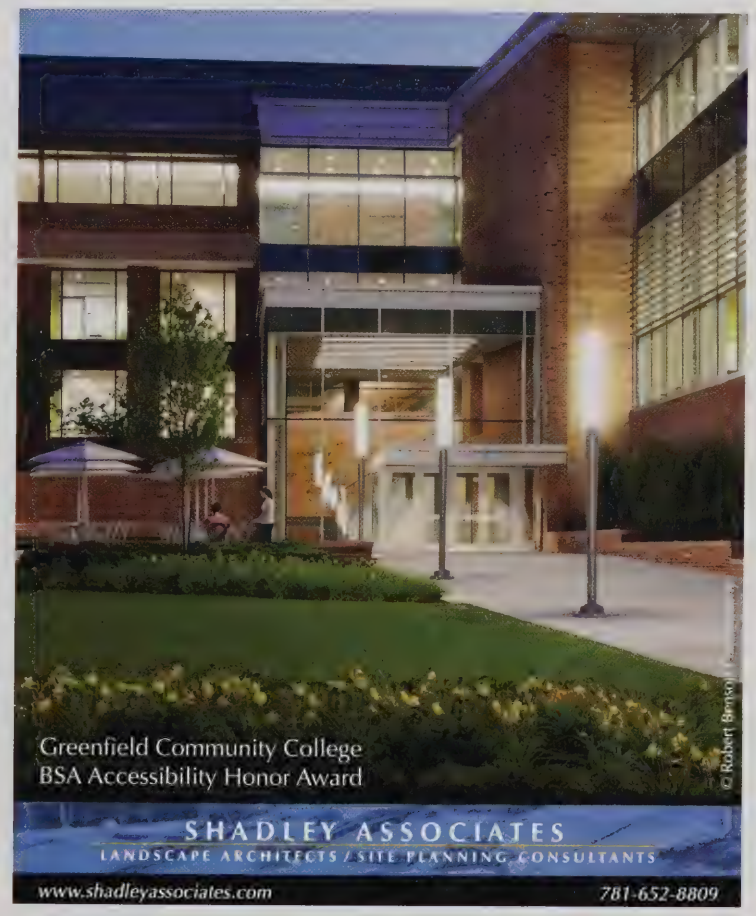
"People claim ownership over memory," said Bogart, "and the battle is over how people want to remember particular individuals." In the year following the attacks, Bogart said she and fellow committee members wrestled with the proponents of community-sponsored memorial projects that were, in their opinion, inappropriately personal and funereal for civic spaces. It's a charge that Tellalian, in Boston, determined to avoid from the outset. "We don't want to be known just by our misfortune," he said. "We don't want to heap ashes on our heads."

Plattus, at Yale, discerns another trend in contemporary memorial design: a move away from representation. Decades of acclaim for Maya Lin's uncompromisingly minimalist, abstract Vietnam Veterans' Memorial (1980–83) have eased the sting of contemporary criticism of her design as "a black trench that scars the Mall," in the words of Vietnam veteran Tom Carhart in 1981. Since then, said Plattus, there has been "a real groundswell—not unanimous, but pretty substantial—that this was the way forward in making memorials."

Consciously or not, the design that evolved for the Armenian Heritage Park reflects these principles. It uses abstract, geometric forms (no figurative representation of "Mother Armenia"); it evokes the broader historic struggles of all immigrants, not only Armenians; and—if successful—it will offer multivalent possibilities for interpretation shaped by visitors' own histories.

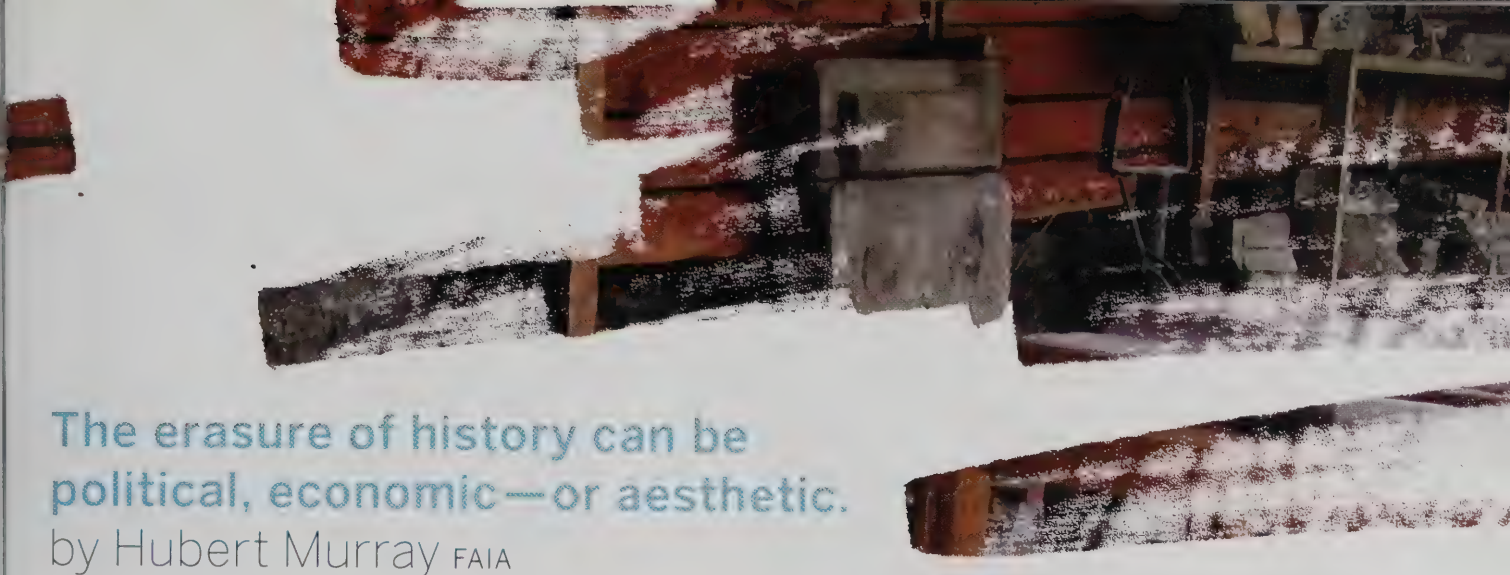
A week after the dedication ceremonies at the Armenian Heritage Park, Tellalian shows a visitor around the site where he intended that memory "should resonate in a hopeful and celebratory manner." A group of teenage tourists pose in front of the sculpture. A small boy stands in the middle of the labyrinth, daring the central jet to rise and soak him. And on the rim of the reflecting pool, their long stems resting in the water, someone has placed 10 red roses. ■







PULVERIZING THE PAST



The erasure of history can be political, economic—or aesthetic.

by Hubert Murray FAIA

On the night of May 6, 1993, Serbian militia targeted and destroyed the Ferhat Pasha mosque in Banja Luka, Bosnia, the city's most important place of worship and one of the finest examples of 16th-century Ottoman architecture in the Balkans. The mosque was not only blown up, but the rubble—including tiles and architectural ornament—was crushed and carted off as landfill, and the site paved over for use as a parking lot. The intent of the aggressor was to eliminate a people and its history from living memory.

Thirty-five years earlier, in May 1958, demolition crews had moved into Boston's West End neighborhood to begin a three-year period of "slum clearance," subsidized by federal funding, executed by the Boston Redevelopment Authority, and abetted by a private developer with close political ties. Estimates put the preclearance population at about 20,000, a mix of more than 20 ethnic, cultural, or religious identities. More than 7,000 residents were directly affected by the demolition, which created 50 acres of developable land recognizable today by the towers of Charles River Park.

The response of the Bosnians to the pulverization of their center of religious and social life has been to reconstruct the mosque in meticulous detail, building from record drawings and photographs developed by the University of Sarajevo School of Architecture as a studio for teaching measured drawing. The reconstruction is now well under way, a reassertion of communal identity and resilience.

The West Enders, on the other hand, scattered to the suburbs. Without real estate and the wherewithal to physically reconstruct their community, they have created out of the rubble what one of them calls a "neighborhood of the mind"—a virtual community sustained by reunions, the West End Museum, and *The West Ender* newspaper.

Superficial differences notwithstanding (ethnic cleansing is not slum clearance), the response of both communities has been an assertion of communal identity through resolute resistance to the erasure of memory. In both cases, architecture and the urban fabric have played important roles as the armature and repository of communal memory in enabling, sustaining, and even promoting social and individual aspirations.

For the Bosnians of Banja Luka, the Ferhat Pasha mosque was a manifestation of social identity and aspiration just as the streets of the West End represented for generations of Boston immigrants the living, pulsing potential of the American melting pot. In both responses, there is an invocation of memory as instrument (record drawings for reconstruction; museum exhibits documenting the vitality of an urban neighborhood) and as inspiration, re-creating the past physically or virtually to ensure a future. As barbarous as atrocities against individual people may be, the wholesale elimination of the communal past can be more chillingly effective as a way of ensuring no future for a people.

As easy as it may be to draw this conclusion when describing the intents and effects of bloody war, there is also a cautionary inference to be made in reviewing the destructive record of modernity in architecture and urban planning.

Le Corbusier's visionary projects, the "Plan Voisin" for Paris (1925) and more particularly his "Ilot Insalubre No. 6 à Paris" (1937), are calls to erase the existing city fabric and start afresh in a city of high-rise towers linked by superhighways and aerial walkways over fields of green. The point here is not necessarily Le Corbusier's specific vision of the street as "a machine for traffic" or any of his other recommendations, but his insistence that the world must begin again—that the city must be seen as a tabula rasa to create an architecture commensurate with the new age.

Le Corbusier was not unique in this aggressive utopianism. The Futurists before him, in their 1914 Messagio, declared that their vision for architecture "cannot be subject to any law of historical continuity. It must be as new as our frame of mind is new." Even Gropius, in less messianic terms, determined that architecture should be taught as craft, and art history not taught as a "history

FOR MORE INFORMATION

of styles, but rather to further active understanding of historical working methods and techniques."

In other words, for the Modernists, history—our collective memory—was as it was for Henry Ford: bunk.

Following the trauma of the First World War, this attitude is perhaps understandable: The recent memory of massive slaughter was too much to bear. So, too, with the Second World War. The journalist and historian Giles Tremlett, writing about the aftermath of Franco's Spain, sees something of this "running away forwards" in the Spanish love of modernity, especially in the development of coastal resorts. "The eagerness with which the new is embraced has something to do with the memory, real or inherited, of poverty," in many cases only one generation away.

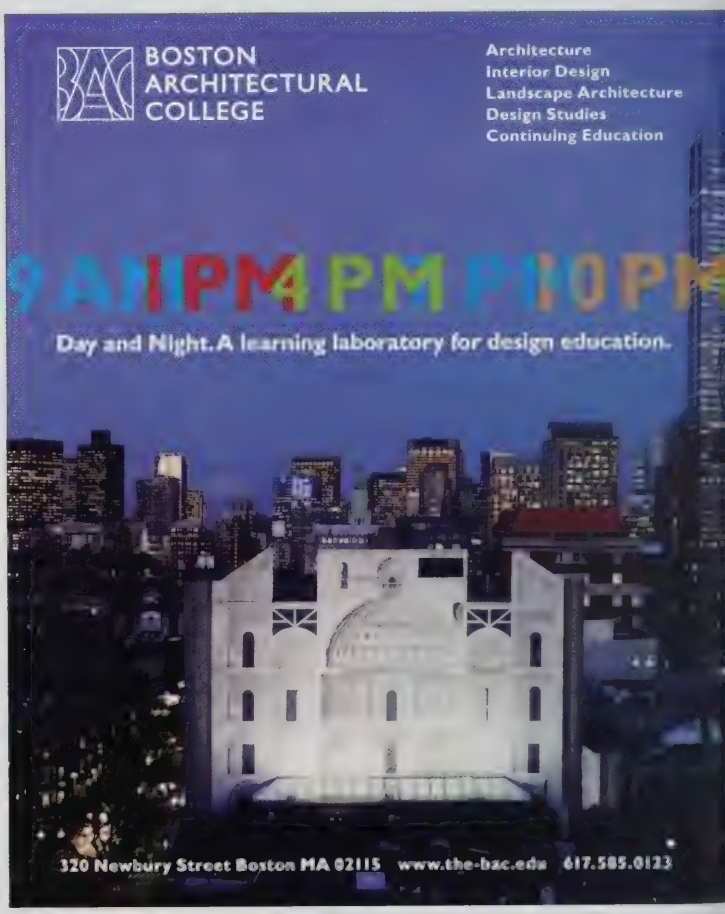
Less explicable, except perhaps through an interpretation of presidential hubris, is the avowedly antimemorial essence of François Mitterand's Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, which the novelist W.G. Sebald describes in the words of one of his characters "as the official manifestation of the increasingly importunate urge to break with everything which still has some living connection with the past."

It seems that Marx was right in his not altogether unadmiring assessment of capitalism's "constant revolutionizing of production… All fixed, fast frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned…" This might almost have been advertiser's copy for the building of the Centre Beaubourg in Paris, or the demolition of the *hutongs* of Beijing.

The allure of modernity is manifested in the major cities of too many newly developing countries in all quarters of the globe, bristling as they are with glass towers—take your pick from Shenzhen, Abu Dhabi, Lagos, or Bucharest. These architectural stage sets are the signifiers of modernity and "success" on one side of the coin; an escape from complicated pasts associated with rural or nomadic life on the other—the squalor of poverty and, in some cases, the shame of parochial identities, prejudices, and animosities.

The alienating qualities of capitalism and its voracious appetite for land and lives are only too obvious, particularly to those who are dispossessed, whether they be the West Enders in Boston or the shanty dwellers of Nairobi's Mathare Valley. No amount of collective storytelling can assuage the loss of place or opportunity in a winner-take-all society. And in a "constantly





revolutionizing" world, there is not necessarily safe haven in an imagined community of the past.

A passive alternative to the physical destruction of place is the insidiously effective erasure of names. The original St. Petersburg in Russia, named for the tsar and invoking the saint, was changed in secular, democratic, prerevolutionary times to Petrograd; following the revolution to Leningrad; and in the post-Soviet era back to the original. It is like a series of linguistic and historical photo-shoppings, made to conform with the prevailing ideology and to erase its predecessor. The naming of the streets and residential towers built over the ruins of the West End for Emerson, Thoreau, and Hawthorne suggests that the linguistic erasure of memory is not a lost art.

But to address Marx: Is it possible to practice contemporary architecture and urbanism without the erasure of memory, without all that is solid melting into air, and without resorting to a pastiche of historical reference? Is the only alternative to the autocratic visionary Robert Moses and his massive projects a retreat into the comfortable arms of Jane Jacobs and the neighborhood action committee?

The building of the Cross-Bronx Expressway destroyed communities, smashed lives, and erased memory even as it embodied the American dream of outward mobility. The irony of saving the West Village from destruction by the Lower Manhattan Expressway in the 1960s—a victory for neighborhood architecture—is that less prosperous residents have been exiled by the high prices that follow such preservation. Does the value of memory lie in the buildings and streets or in the people?

Examples abound of modern buildings incorporating traces of the things, events, or communities that precede them. Norman Foster's restoration of the Reichstag in Berlin is a technical tour de force, a progressive icon of German democracy that simultaneously envelops the signifiers of a troubled past, the graffiti of Soviet soldiers, and the scorch marks of an earlier assault on democracy. Ralph Erskine's Byker Wall in Newcastle, England, is an example of modern housing, a massive urban form that nevertheless enshrined the social connections and aspirations of the working-class community it replaced.

The rebuilding of the mosque at Banja Luka and the ongoing enterprise of the West End storytellers are acts of communal resilience, convincing reminders that the nurturing of shared memory is a valuable antidote to the forces of destruction and to those who believe that the future can be built as if there had not been a past. ■

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FAUXSTALGIA

WHEN FAKE ISN'T JUST AS GOOD

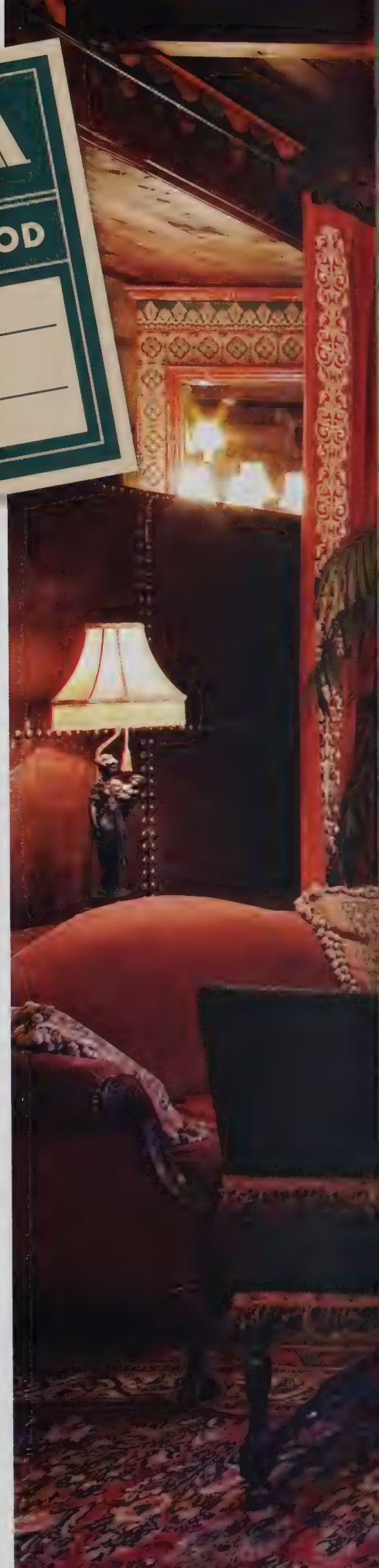
BY CHRIS GRIMLEY

It began a while ago, my ongoing love affair with surfaces. An undergraduate degree in interior design secured a place for it: wallpapers that shimmered like gold, porcelain tiles that mimicked marble. I embraced it, knew that there were many ways to make things look like they were something they were not, and even had a brief side career in faux finishing to supplement earnings while at school.

When I returned to school for an architectural education, there were questions and provocations about this love of the cosmetic: hoary quotations that a brick knew what it wanted to be, that honest materials were the only right, honorable, even moral way to build a space. Thankfully, the New York avant-noise trio Blonde Redhead put out an album during the first year of my studies that would become a counter-mantra when this debate inevitably came up: "Fake can be just as good."

I delighted in having this argument with colleagues, on reviews, or at openings. It became a flashpoint for conversation, a real line drawn, with quite clear conditions to the debate. There was Carlo Scarpa and Louis Kahn on one side (call it Team Honesty), and contemporary practices such as Koolhaas/OMA and Herzog & de Meuron proving that, given the right project and circumstances, materiality was a ripe playing field for the profession. (I can even argue the inherent fakeness in Mies van der Rohe's oeuvre on request.)

In the fall of 2007, however, a new breed of counterfeit emerged in the pages of *Wallpaper* and design blogs that would challenge my allegiance to this sacred theme: New York's Royalton Hotel. Once the grand dame of Ian Schrager and Philippe Starck's boutique empire, it had been renovated by Robin Standefer and Stephen Alesch, New Yorkers who operate under the firm name Roman and Williams Buildings and Interiors, as a dark, deco, *arrière-garde*



OPPOSITE
Cozy or camp? The Bowery Hotel lobby in New York City, one of the many *arrière-garde* spinoffs currently in vogue. Photo: Gregory Goode.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
For a slideshow of more fauxstalgia, see architectureboston.com





ABOVE
A painting hanging in the Bowery Hotel bar. Photo: Gregory Goode.

tableau, complete with seemingly found artifacts, rounded corners, and chiaroscuro lighting effects.

This made sense, given their own backgrounds as production designers on such diverse films as *Addicted to Love* and *Zoolander*. And as with all good design ideas (especially ones located in New York that are highly photographable and easily digested by the media), variations soon began to appear. The Ace Hotel and its ancillary spaces, the Bowery and Maritime hotels; Public restaurant; and then, in Boston, places such as AllSaints Spitalfields, 5 Napkin Burger, The Beehive, and the Woodward tavern at the Ames Hotel. And we are bound to see more of this when Baz Luhrmann's highly-stylized film version of *The Great Gatsby* is released this winter.

My colleagues and I were puzzled by this new trend, since it doesn't seem to fit into any of the familiar design dialogues. We settled on the moniker "fauxstalgia" to label the phenomenon.

What these spaces have in common is a decidedly unmodern sensibility in how they are designed and deployed. The interiors hark back to a moment just before the emergence of the mass-produced design object—right before the moment when Charles Eames made his plywood splint.

They may seem tongue-in-cheek, but these places are not just slightly coy in their use of filament bulbs that mimic candles, or that fashion shelving and other displays out of pipe fittings with overscaled and clunky connectors, or that leave wood raw and unfinished, or blur the line between what is ready-made and what is specifically designed. In spaces like the Ace Hotel lobby and the bar at the Bowery, they recall a preglobalized, even colonialist sensibility and style.



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In the Ace, the hotel lobby is remade in the guise of a gentlemen's club from the 1940s, complete with taxidermy, a seemingly well-read library, oversized furniture, and low-wattage lighting that provides a sense of intimacy (or cover for a voyeur). At the Bowery, palm fronds lazily reflect in hand-waxed wood panels and found furnishings—including an entire bar—that are reminiscent of pre-Castro Havana. New or contemporary furnishings, Standefer and Alesch have said, would be too distracting and unfamiliar in these spaces.

Another curio: Most of these are exclusive hospitality settings, and many of their "public" spaces have become de facto gathering spots for urban nomads—the hipster, the freelancer, the traveler—allowing them to temporarily revel in the seeming luxury of these branded spaces that they could never afford to make their own.

What has brought this unmistakably antimodern trend to the surface now? Is it the desire to retreat from a world that is so interconnected and immediate? The desire to have something that is certifiably authentic in a seemingly vapid video culture? Or is it, as some have suggested, that during a time of structural instability in all aspects of world finance and politics, we yearn for something to anchor ourselves to the past, no matter how idealized?

To me, there is something decidedly false in the deployment of design in these spaces, in their earnest morality, in the connoisseurship implied in their production. By summoning a culture and a class that cannot be reproduced, these spaces are not deceptively nostalgic, nor are they honest to the memory they evoke. Rather than engaging in an explicit practice of materiality, surface, and use, or even evidencing a sense of delight in the discovery process, the Roman and Williams take on recycling is literal: a yearning for stability by using signifiers that ultimately have little meaning.

Instead, these spaces operate as film sets: surface-level evocations of pasts that we now pay—handsomely—to get lost in, while bartenders in curled mustaches mix yet another batch of artisanal bitters and cordials, and the only evidence of the contemporary are the faces illuminated by laptops and tablets, and the sharing of instantly antiqued digital photographs. ■







RECOLLECTIONS

MEMORIES OFTEN WASH OVER US IN WAVES, collections of fragments of color, sound, textures, moments.

Masumi Hayashi's panoramic photo collages embody this sort of episodic remembrance. These vast landscapes record traces of human occupation, while each individual photograph reveals the shift of a cloud, the movement of grass, and the progress of time. Like Eadweard Muybridge's early stop-action studies or Harold Edgerton's milk drop and bullet-bursting balloons, these photographs suggest that there's a larger dynamic story beyond what is obvious on the surface. Unlike those carefully contained studio explorations, Hayashi works at the scale of the North American West.

From 1990–2000, she photographed the War Relocation Authority camps where Japanese-Americans were incarcerated during World War II. The collages on the following pages are all from that series. Much of Hayashi's work encourages viewers to consider places that we'd often rather forget: internment camps, abandoned prisons, Superfund sites.

She was born at the Gila River camp in Rivers, Arizona, in 1945.

She died in 2006, shot by a neighbor after asking him to turn his music down.

LEFT

Tule Lake Relocation Camp, Sewer, Tulelake, California. Panoramic photo collage with Fuji Crystal Archive prints, 1996, 32" × 59" (detail)

To explore Masumi Hayashi's larger project on remembering the Japanese internment camps, including panoramic photographs, interviews, maps, and family albums, visit masumihayashi.com. For Hayashi's entire body of photographic work, see masumimuseum.com



ABOVE
Heart Mountain Relocation Camp, Hospital, Park, Wyoming, 1995, 32" × 70"







ABOVE
Bay Farm Internment Camp, British Columbia, 1996, 26" × 64"

BELOW
Poston III Relocation Camp, Sewer, Yuma, Arizona, 1997, 26" × 63"



ABOVE
Lemon Creek Internment Camp, British Columbia, 1996. 27" × 65"





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photo by Andy Caulfield

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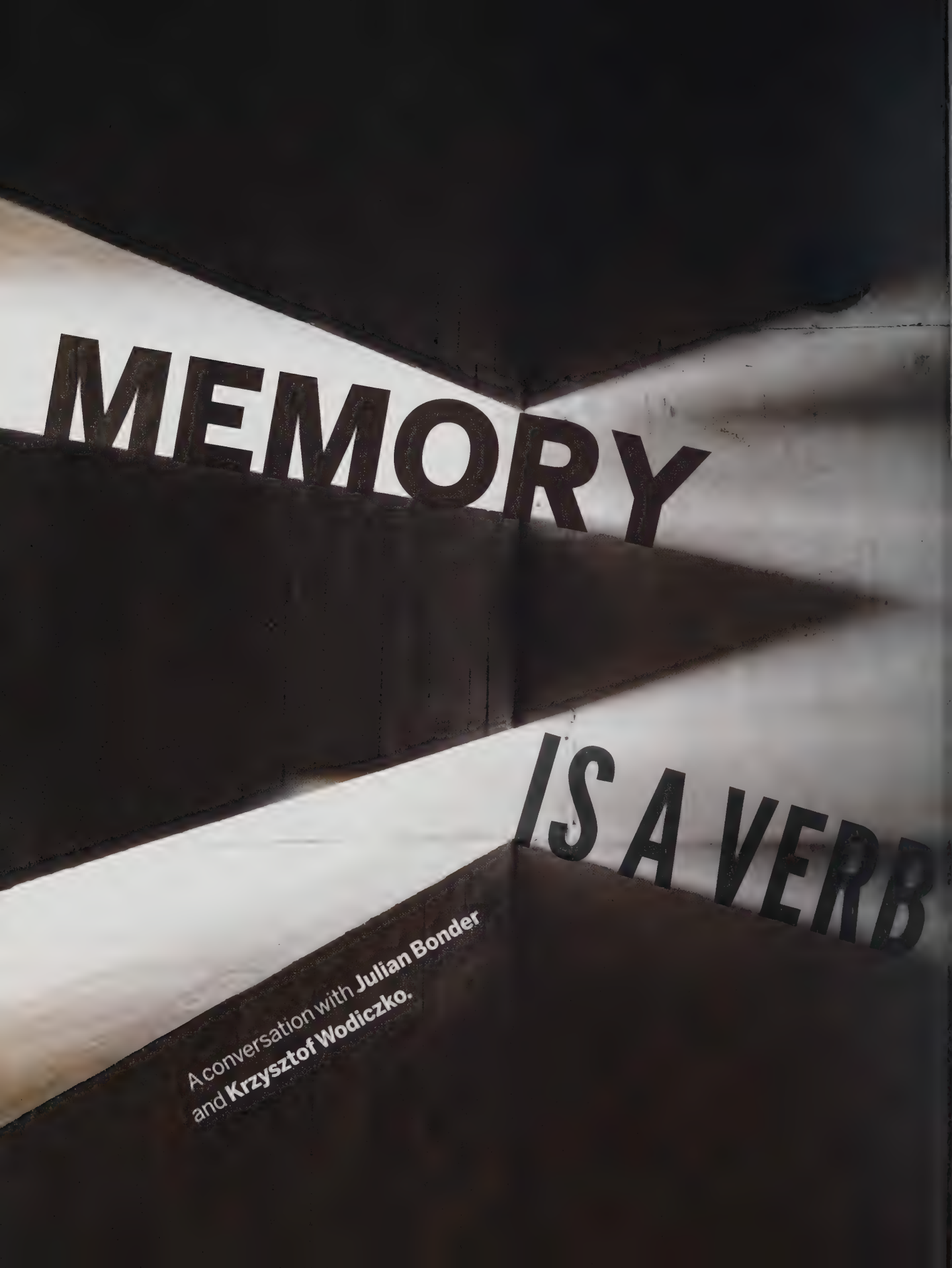
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Weyerhaeuser



A conversation with **Julian Bonder** and **Krzysztof Wodiczko.**

Those who believe great design is incompatible with political content should consider the work of **Julian Bonder and Krzysztof Wodiczko**. Over the past decade, the two men have formed a design partnership that focuses on social memory related to unspeakable violations of human rights: genocide, holocaust, mass political violence. Their most recent project is the **Memorial to the Abolition of Slavery** in Nantes, France, a national monument that examines human bondage from the 18th-century slave trade to modern-day trafficking for sex or labor. Bonder and Wodiczko spoke with *ArchitectureBoston* editor Renée Loth just after the memorial's opening in late May.

ArchitectureBoston: Built memorials are a way that we institutionalize or concretize memory. Yet you two see memorials not as static and still but as places that are alive to the possibilities of activism. Can you explain how a memorial can provide this possibility of action?

Julian Bonder: Societies and cultures are increasingly calling for memorials. There's an enormous number of projects that are looking at the past and trying to embody it physically. But we think that the process of remembering is in the *present*, that it is an action, not an object. The purpose of the memorial is not to physically manifest memory as an object but to invite people to think, which is an action.

Krzysztof Wodiczko: There is a danger that a memorial provides a premature closure of a collective cultural trauma; that it allows us to resolve our pain too quickly so that we don't have to think about it or discuss it or work through the trauma. Perhaps the 9/11 memorial in New York might have been much more inspiring had there been time for more public discussion about what it is commemorating, and why.

ArchitectureBoston: It's challenging to try to find the right balance between the public's need to be heard in that conversation, at a very emotional time, and the artist's role, which is to help translate that into something physical. In your experience, either with [the slavery memorial at] Nantes or in other projects elsewhere, how do you achieve that balance?

Krzysztof Wodiczko: It's impossible to work alone. It's important to involve committees, historians, people who are working through the issue that's being commemorated, as well as those who are affected by those issues today or are survivors of the fallout of past events.

Julian Bonder: Part of the challenge of any project is how you respond to constituencies that may be asking for certain kinds of approaches and also how one responds to that intangible aspect, which is the suffering of others. How do you translate suffering into something that becomes a hopeful moment, without trying to redeem historical trauma?

These projects involve not only an enormous amount of time but an enormous amount of repetition of aspirations, almost as if you repeat enough things, you can get some of those things into the public discourse. Present-day slavery, for example. At the opening [in Nantes], the public officials were all declaring that this memorial should serve as an instrument to bring people to a discussion of present-day slavery, which is what we always were trying to say. Whether that will actually happen remains to be seen.

ArchitectureBoston: What I like about this project is that it doesn't make the link to present-day slavery in a contrived way; it seems natural.

Krzysztof Wodiczko: At the outset, the city itself maybe was not aware about the meaning of the very act of designating such a large chunk of space in a symbolically, emotionally charged part of the embankment, in front of Palace de Justice, the center of the city. They had an intuition, and part of our work was to prove to them that their intuition was absolutely right. It's not that we were designing things so much as that we were bringing up the visibility and emotional impact of that very terrain. Certain groups couldn't fully understand this, because they were expecting something dramatically new, something vertical, something narrative to happen; but others were on our side. So this was a long battleground between various expectations. Fortunately, the general concept actually became the project.

LEFT
A detail from the Memorial to the Abolition of Slavery, Nantes, France. Photo: Jean Dominique Billaud.

Julian Bonder: Also, the very ground has stories that are embedded, that are not visible. Part of our task is to listen not only to the constituencies but to the sites themselves to try to interpret what is there and what may not be visible in terms of its own past. All our projects involve research about what is there, visible and not visible, under the surface.

Krzysztof Wodiczko: For example, one myth is that there were abolitionists in Nantes; there was actually nobody. So raising the consciousness of the city about its own implication in the slave trade is part of the project. But the trick is not producing guilt; rather, raising a consciousness and an understanding of a new mission: what the city is going to do for the future.

Julian Bonder: That is also connected to the scale of the space, the fact that this is not an object of memory but a series of spaces that are inviting people to inhabit and to think and to discuss. The time that it takes to go from one place to the other is very long, and the physical conditions of looking at the ground and moving in silence, or speaking with people and then descending into damp, humid spaces 150 meters underground by the water, with the sounds of the water…

ArchitectureBoston: In a very constricted space…

Julian Bonder: But still somehow filled with light and reflection from the water—it's very strange, because the structure that existed there is extremely heavy, yet because we made some incisions, it's full of light. So again, we are not trying to represent this, but to invite people to think.

"Memory as a social and political process should be allowed to be agonistic, that is, based on disagreements." *—Krzysztof Wodiczko*

Krzysztof Wodiczko: This is related also to bodily perception. It's not only the reading of those inscribed texts but also walking-reading—a passage of reading. So the relation between people and the space is felt through the body and bones. It takes time to read every plaque with information about every slave trade expedition departing from Nantes; getting closer, maybe kneeling to read, or at least lowering your body—all very important.

Julian Bonder: You see people's physical movement in space change from the familiar walking position with heads straight up to a less sure kind of physical condition, changing the position of the body with head downward. It internalizes the process of walking in a different way.

Krzysztof Wodiczko: In one passage, there is an opening that is lit, a kind of window through which is framed the Palace of Justice on the other side of the river. Now that is a place where lots of conversations could take place! The issue is, to what degree can this memorial create conditions under which things will be done, to the point where there will be no need to end up as a court case in the Palace of Justice? So the symbolic space can actually help the process of justice happen, on an ethical rather than a moralistic plane.

Julian Bonder: The ethical plane also connects to the notion of the other; who are these others, whom we don't know? How can we address the presence of others who have suffered so much in the past, or may be suffering today, without attempting to represent them? The city should be commended for taking this on but also for allowing the scale of this project to maintain the character of emptiness that is so significant for [allowing] us to think. Because if you go to many historical museums or memorials, they have become didactic. They're filled with lectures and objects. And the city allowed 150 meters underground with almost nothing but one's own experience.

Krzysztof Wodiczko: At the opening, there were some schoolchildren with their teachers who immediately started to discuss the matter. It was quite moving. One child, if I remember well, said, "How can such a thing be both so beautiful and so sad?"

ArchitectureBoston: Give that child a star!

Krzysztof Wodiczko: The children were talking about the issue of freedom for children, about themselves being in a kind of twilight zone between freedom and slavery [as students]. They were mobilized by this memorial to think about situations that normally are not understood as enslavement.

Julian Bonder: It illustrates that this is a work in progress. It's interesting to think of those young people in 10 years visiting the memorial again. As long as this place has invited conversation, then they may become useful. I say *may* become useful—if they establish only one way of looking at the past, then they become static.

ArchitectureBoston: What about your own memories, backgrounds, and experiences? How do they shape the way you approach this work?

Krzysztof Wodiczko: There is a saying: "Somewhere

between memorials there is Poland." From my own upbringing in Poland, I was fed up with memorials. It was a kind of disease of our national culture, this obsession with commemorating tragic losses, heroic sacrifice, without preparing us for much more complex and difficult conditions and work to do for the future, how to make the world better. So I think that that Polish experience could explain my drive toward different kinds of memorials, because we should end this somber, serious, passive repetition of, almost, reconstructing the event for the pleasure of suffering. It's kind of masochistic.

ArchitectureBoston: Do you think that's unique to Poland?

Krzysztof Wodiczko: Poland is symptomatic because so many wars went through it. So many catastrophes.

Julian Bonder: To add to that, I come from a family part of whom escaped the Holocaust but didn't speak about it. Even my grandmother, one of the most expressive people I remember, never wanted to talk about the bad parts of Berlin.

Krzysztof Wodiczko: I had the same. My mother never spoke about it, even though her entire family was murdered in the first week of my life. But her silence was not the result of a traumatic shattering of memory; it was more an irritation with other Jews who were indulging themselves in tragic recollection.

Julian Bonder: Right. I grew up studying under dictatorships where we couldn't speak about democracy; we knew that some people at the university were actually disguised secret service. Some people I knew from the university disappeared. Still, none of these autobiographical notes legitimize anything we do, because again, it's not about self-indulgent memories that we project into the public. It's about how we think, perhaps from our experiences, how can we somehow extrapolate some of that to silence ourselves and to invite the voices of others.

ArchitectureBoston: When you say that your experiences, your past, should not be used to legitimize the work, then what does? Just the work itself?

Julian Bonder: Of course, we cannot avoid our own subjectivity. [But] when we think of memorials, I always try to understand this as a kind of process of deferral of the self. That doesn't mean that we don't think that authorship is extremely important; but it's not about the author, it's about the process—about the project. It's about laws for the abolition of slavery.



ABOVE
A detail from the Memorial to the Abolition of Slavery, Nantes, France. Photo: Philippe Ruault.

ArchitectureBoston: Let's talk about the idea of universal human rights. Some cultures insist that human rights are a Western concept and that imposing them on traditional societies and practices is almost a kind of imperialism. What do you make of that?

Krzysztof Wodiczko: By virtue of being born human, we acquire certain natural rights.

Julian Bonder: One of the texts that receives you at the entrance of what we call the "Monumental Stair" is a portion of the 1948 Articles of Declaration of Human Rights. It's very significant to understand the 1948 declaration, as almost a rebeginning of the struggle.

Krzysztof Wodiczko: That's a contagious idea. When you look at all these countries that are not Western, you see people struggling to gain access to those rights. The issue is how the cultural differences and all those other rights are acknowledged.

Julian Bonder: The question then becomes, Can these projects help countries and society understand public space as public? In which ways do societies take risks? Because it's clear that you can have banalization of suffering, aesthetization of suffering embedded in every project. But can we collectively affirm in the public sphere that in this kind of work, aesthetics should be always at the service of a larger ethical, political condition?

Krzysztof Wodiczko: What we are saying goes beyond our project now. It justifies the larger horizon that we have and our hopes toward memorial projects in general. But one important aspect is that memory as a social and political process should be allowed to be agonistic, that is, based on disagreements. Memory as unison is a danger.

Julian Bonder: Because it suppresses.

Krzysztof Wodiczko: Memorials should create conditions for people to argue, to exchange opposing views, and confront their memories and their interpretation; [they] should become a forum for major debates, and actually multiply them and prolong them, and include more and more voices. That will be the best way to think of a memorial as a discursive place. Of course, a memorial could also do something to help people engage in projects that will ameliorate the situations.

ArchitectureBoston: Julian, you've said, "Memory to me is a verb," the idea that memory is not a passive thing. I'd like to go deeper into what that means to you.

Julian Bonder: There is an aspect of that which is an affirmation, almost like declaring publicly, "Here I am." It's very significant. What Krzysztof is saying about the kind of agonistic conditions for debate comes from a way of looking at democracy as always a work in progress, not a static condition.

Krzysztof Wodiczko: It's a protest. The word "protest" has a component which means "witness." So I testify publicly to what I know is wrong in order to propose something better. Memory and protest are connected, and it's not an accident that many protests take place in front of memorials because they actually bear witness, although they were not consciously designed for that purpose.



Julian Bonder: That is also connected to spatial experience, because again, if it's an object, then you look at it. And once you start looking at it, the main way to connect is through your gaze. And your gaze is always about you controlling the object that you are witnessing. There is something about the problems of the gaze that has been discussed in contemporary art, but here what we're trying to suggest is that the spatial experience invites more senses, invites other ways to address something that is vicarious. Because most of the time we're talking of vicarious memories: I have not been a slave, so why could I relate to that?

Krzysztof Wodiczko: Then there's the other side of the story, that there are people who are survivors of injustice and traumatic events. They are themselves memorials, even more so, and they can communicate what they remember. So one aspect of design of a memorial could be to provide equipment, inspiration, and encouragement for those people to become speaking memorials. Many memorials could have more of a media component, taking advantage of new digital communications technologies, so there could be some interactive aspect between sections of the group in exchanging memories. There is so much that can be done in design.

Julian Bonder: It has to do with the ability of designers to apply insight to unfamiliar conditions. In a way, every project we do, both as architects and artists, relates to a certain unfamiliarity. Those unfamiliar conditions are addressing us, are demanding from us, are questioning us. And that's where they become ethical instruments. Because they demand from us a response that we may not even have, yet we have to search for it.

Krzysztof Wodiczko: For example, the Vietnam War Memorial is very good. But there is no acknowledgement of the 4 million Vietnamese people who lost their lives, and the traumatic fallout of that war on that nation, two nations, in fact. So it's important to see what memorials are not saying. Is there a possibility to provide supplemental, complementary projects that will help us to reinscribe what is missing, what they forgot?

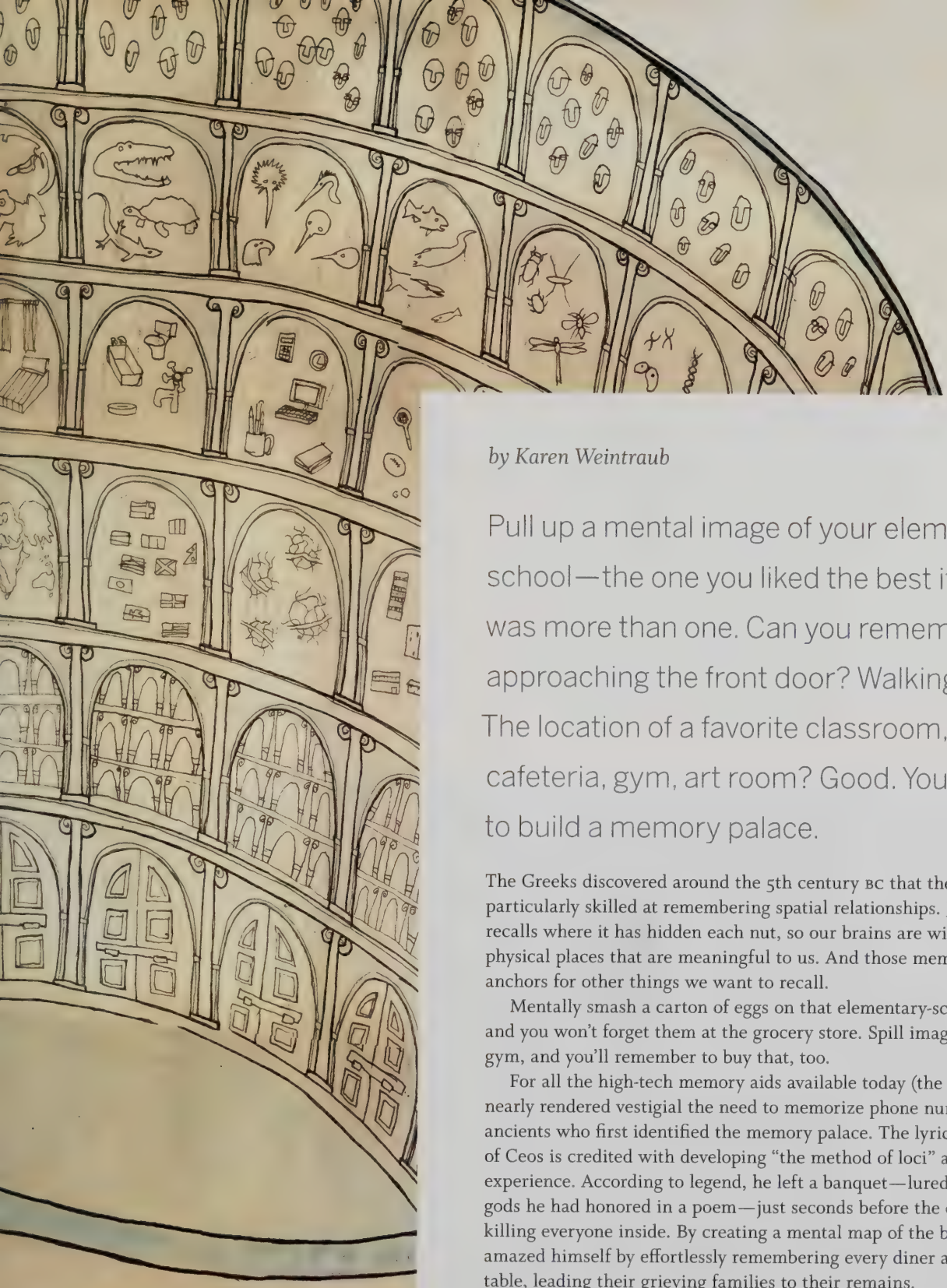
Julian Bonder: I think this goes to the heart of the problem with memorials, which is that they are built so that we forget about them. They serve an aspiration of closure, as Krzysztof said before, yet the word "monument" comes from "moneo," which is to remind, to warn, and to advise. ■

FOR MORE INFORMATION
For more views of the Memorial to the Abolition of Slavery at Nantes, France, and for a longer version of this interview, go to architectureboston.com



MEMORY PALACES

THE LOCKET IN
YOUR RIGHT
TEMPORAL LOBE



by Karen Weintraub

Pull up a mental image of your elementary school—the one you liked the best if there was more than one. Can you remember approaching the front door? Walking inside? The location of a favorite classroom, the cafeteria, gym, art room? Good. You're ready to build a memory palace.

The Greeks discovered around the 5th century BC that the human mind is particularly skilled at remembering spatial relationships. Just as the squirrel recalls where it has hidden each nut, so our brains are wired to recollect physical places that are meaningful to us. And those memories can serve as anchors for other things we want to recall.

Mentally smash a carton of eggs on that elementary-school front walk, and you won't forget them at the grocery store. Spill imaginary milk in the gym, and you'll remember to buy that, too.

For all the high-tech memory aids available today (the cell phone has nearly rendered vestigial the need to memorize phone numbers), it was the ancients who first identified the memory palace. The lyric poet Simonides of Ceos is credited with developing "the method of loci" after a near-death experience. According to legend, he left a banquet—lured outside by twin gods he had honored in a poem—just seconds before the ceiling collapsed, killing everyone inside. By creating a mental map of the banquet hall, he amazed himself by effortlessly remembering every diner around the giant table, leading their grieving families to their remains.



PREVIOUS PAGE
Rhys Bevan Jones, *Memory Palace*, 2008, pen, ink, pencil, and digital imaging.

ABOVE
Rhys Bevan Jones, *Drawing Depression*, 2009, mixed media and digital imaging.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
rhysbevanjones.com

Once discovered, this memory trick became a standard of the orators of the day and has been "rediscovered" many times since, most recently by Joshua Foer in *Moonwalking with Einstein*. The 2011 best-seller describes the year Foer spent becoming a national memory champion.

Foer constructed a memory palace out of his childhood home to break the U.S. record in speed cards: memorizing a deck of cards faster than anyone else. According to his research, the memories are better cemented if they are more memorable in the first place. A smashed carton of eggs on a front stoop is easier to recall than an intact one. Lewd images are even better, Foer's memory coach advised him.

Better not design your memory palace with an open plan, though. "Medieval memory treatises explore what kind of buildings make the best memory palaces and conclude that buildings with irregular layouts and lots of nooks to dip into are the best," Foer wrote in an e-mail.

But memory palaces aren't just a parlor trick. Elizabeth Glisky, head of the psychology department at the University of Arizona, uses them to help boost skills in people with brain damage or age-related memory problems. People can form a new visual memory, even if they may struggle with other types of memory, her research suggests, particularly if the thing to be remembered is connected to an image of themselves—essentially using their own bodies as memory palaces. If patients imagine themselves walking into their doctor's office, for instance, they will be more likely to remember an appointment there.

"Even people with memory problems often have very good knowledge of themselves" until the late stages of dementia or Alzheimer's, Glisky said. "They still seem to be able to update their self-knowledge even if they don't know who they are." The method of loci also helps patients with brain injuries—except





those with damage to the right temporal lobe, the seat of visual memory storage, Glisky said.

The "palace" doesn't even have to be a building. The morning commute to work or local jogging trail would do just as well. If a list has to be memorized in order, just anchor the first item to a landmark early in the trip, and the rest in sequence along the route.

Not everyone is equally gifted at creating these visual memories, but architects may be among the best. "They're trained to think about space in deeper, more elaborate ways," noted Foer. "Spaces have meaning for architects in a way they don't for most people, and that makes them more memorable." Still, no one has ever studied whether architects and others who are visually inclined are better at forming such memories.

Research has shown that men generally have a slight edge when it comes to visual memories, as women do with verbal ones (though there is more of a range within each gender than between men and women). John D.E. Gabrieli, a professor in the department of brain and cognitive sciences at the Harvard-MIT Division of Health Sciences and Technology, said his research suggests that when men lay down new memories, the right side of their brain—the part that handles visual and spatial information—is highly activated. In women, the left, verbal side receives extra blood flow during memory tasks.

It's still unclear whether a memory palace works because of the strength of people's spatial memories or simply because of the effort it takes to create them, said Daniel L. Schacter, a professor of psychology at Harvard University. Building a memory palace is a matter of "putting in the time and developing it like a skill," he said. "Whether the investment in time will be justified with the payoff..." he shrugs.

That's a question individuals, not scientists, will have to answer. ■



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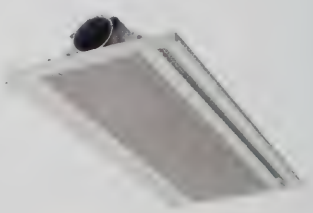


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Books

Memorial Mania: Public Feeling in America
Erika Doss
The University of Chicago Press, 2010
Reviewed by Freke Vuijst

Say, 50 years from now, a young woman boards the train in the small California town of Martinez. Before entering the station, she comes across a monument consisting of a flagpole; a plaque that cites the date September 11, 2001; and two rusty-red pieces of steel. Even if the young woman knows that more than 3,000 American lives were lost on that date in a brazen act of terrorism, would she have any reason to know that the corroded scraps of steel are the mangled remains of the twin towers destroyed on that day? Would the steel pillars speak to her heart, as they spoke to the heart of the mayor of Martinez who commissioned this memorial?

Unlikely.

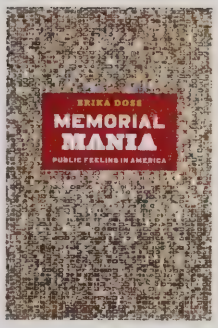
Yet all over America, in more than a hundred cities and towns, 9/11 memorials have been built, often constructed in whole or in part from the metal remains of the towers. Author Erika Doss calls these metal scraps "holy relics."

Doss is a professor of American studies at the University of Notre Dame, and in her highly readable book, she documents the flood of memorials that are relentlessly being built all over contemporary America, commemorating events and people ranging from cancer survivors to murdered teenagers, from organ donors to dead astronauts. But most astonishing are the "terrorism memorials," as Doss calls them. They are intended to commemorate the victims of terrorism, but what they reveal most are the fears and insecurities of our nation, our demand for heroes, and the need to find near-instant "closure" to our national trauma by encapsulating it in a patriotic display of stone and steel.

Doss does not delve deeply into the design of the memorials. Instead, she examines the broader cultural, social, and political aspects of our obsession with memory and history, and why we feel the need to express this obsession in monuments. These memorials will be with us for years to come, and yet, as Doss makes clear, it is not for the future the memorials are built—not for that young woman 50 years from now—but as therapy for our present trauma. Seldom, Doss says, do we meaningfully reflect on what we choose to memorialize and why.

In one of Doss's many colorful anecdotes, she tells of architect Daniel Libeskind (whom Doss calls "something of a memorial guru") presenting an addition to the Denver Art Museum that created a new, outdoor open space. The architect was asked what should be done with that space and Libeskind responded, "a memorial garden." Museum staffers asked: "A memorial to what?"

Indeed. This is the question Doss poses: What are we memorializing, and why?



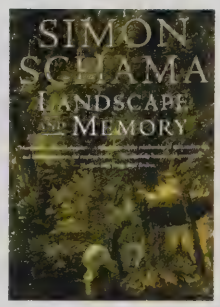
Freke Vuijst covers culture and politics in America for the Dutch news magazine *Vrij Nederland*.

Landscape and Memory
Simon Schama
Random House, 1996
Reviewed by Pratap Talwar

Schama's thesis in this grand excursion through the history of landscape in Western art is that "nature" has been constantly appropriated, represented, interpreted, and reworked both physically and in the collective memory, and that, therefore, man-made and natural landscapes are inseparable. The historian and art critic draws on landscape as the subject of myth, poesia, and the dialectics of urbanization: preservation and development; public and private; nature (wild) and arcadia (idyllic).

Although the book was first published in 1996, a contemporary reading of *Landscape and Memory* translates the common roots of environmental and "public realm" themes in current design practice.

Formally, Schama refutes a Kantian definition of "beauty," arguing that the primal encoding of experience, and its cultural retention and recall—be it the "holy vaulted chamber of the forest roof," rivers of time, or the tectonic permanence of mountains—are legible in all landscape figuration. He observes a common source for the raw expressionism of the German painter Anselm Kiefer's insistent perspective and gritty landscapes of encoded repentance, and his own visceral childhood memories of squishy bog mud between his toes while describing estuarial landscapes. Even in the cool abstract essentialism of a Mondrian painting, Schama imagines the stretching of tree boughs in a flat, airy picture plane. By such interpretation, the pervasiveness of landscape is unassailable.

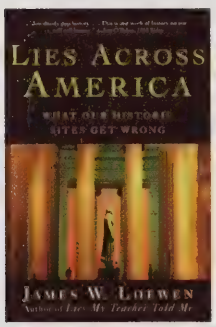


Pratap Talwar is a principal at Thompson Design Group. He works on the design of urban development and green infrastructure projects in Asia, Europe, and the United States.

Similarly, the collage-like appropriation in designed landscape—whether literal replicas of Chinese pagodas in Kew Gardens, idealized sheep pastures of Central Park, or tendril-framed glass enclosures of the Crystal Palace—is legible to Schama as "nature" recalled. So, too, "natural Arcadia" (Yosemite) and "designed Arcadia" (front lawns in suburbia, city parks, or even a building). The program and spatial syntax of nature is transformed by the occupation of man.

Schama identifies three pioneers of ecological thinking. Henry David Thoreau regarded untamed wild as the engine of myth and essential to survival. At Walden he advocated solitary "life perfectly continuous with nature" to prevent its contamination. John Muir, the father of the National Parks, expertly idealized natural landscapes as "common good," a diminishing resource, which, once lost to inhabitation, would be unrecoverable. Claude François Denecourt invented nature trails through the royal preserve of Fontainebleau. By interpreting features of the forest for visitors, Denecourt engendered public entitlement over the protected landscape.

Unlike Thoreau and his compatriots, however, Schama is optimistic and concludes in an ecological stance: "The sum of our pasts… forms the compost of our future." German sculptor Joseph Beuys' 1984 installation *7,000 Oaks* resonates with this sentiment. His final project pushed the edges of art and historic communication by planting live oak saplings in the center of German cities. This act of civic redemption was completed after his passing, the last sapling a memorial to the artist.



Robert David Sullivan has written for *The Boston Globe* and *CommonWealth* magazine. He writes about television, urban issues, and political geography at robertdavidsullivan.typepad.com.

Lies Across America: What Our Historic Sites Get Wrong
James W. Loewen
Touchstone, 2000
Reviewed by Robert David Sullivan

History isn't always written by the winners. As the author explains in this muckraking travelogue, a bit of ingenuity and a lot of nerve can change the perception of historic events for generations to come.

Similar to Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States*, Loewen's book rolls aside the Great (White) Man theory of American history to relay both the heroics and the atrocities omitted from roadside markers. Many examples involve the Native Americans overlooked in all those "First settled in" signs, but *Lies Across America* is foremost about the remarkable success of "Southern heritage" groups, particularly the United Daughters of the Confederacy, in getting their spin carved in stone.

The rehabilitation of the Confederacy takes the form of euphemism (slaves turn into "servants") and selective preservation. (There are opportunities to see slave quarters in plantation houses, but the far worse shelters in the fields have mostly been destroyed.) More impressive is the way Confederacy commemoration frequently overstates popular support for the rebellion. For example, a northern Texas town that opposed secession now has a courthouse monument honoring the Confederate forces who killed scores of residents "determined to destroy the order" of the town (that is, who supported the Union).

Many of these monuments were erected long after anyone with memories of the events was gone, as counter-responses to the civil rights movement. (Loewen writes that Confederate General Nathan Forrest is on more historical markers than anyone else in Tennessee, and it might have something to do with his being the first leader of the Ku Klux Klan.)

How does one know whether to trust a historical marker? One tip is the passive voice. Far from a mere concern of fussy English teachers, it can be a sly tool for leaving out vital information. Beware signs that say structures "were built" (possibly by slaves) or violence "was committed" (by whom, against whom?).

The book moves from west to east, and New England gets only a few pages at the end. Darien, Connecticut, is dinged for not informing visitors that it was a "sundown town" (blacks and Jews not allowed to stay overnight), and New Hampshire is mocked for honoring Franklin Pierce, its only president and a consensus pick for worst person to ever occupy the White House. By this point, the reader must conclude that fixing every marker to satisfy Loewen is an impossible task. Better to bring your smartphone and consult Wikipedia when you stop at a historic site; even that is probably more accurate than whatever was hammered into the ground.

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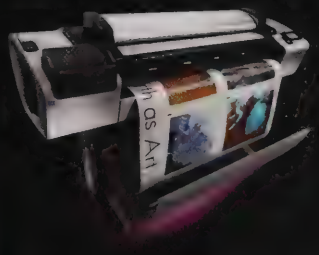




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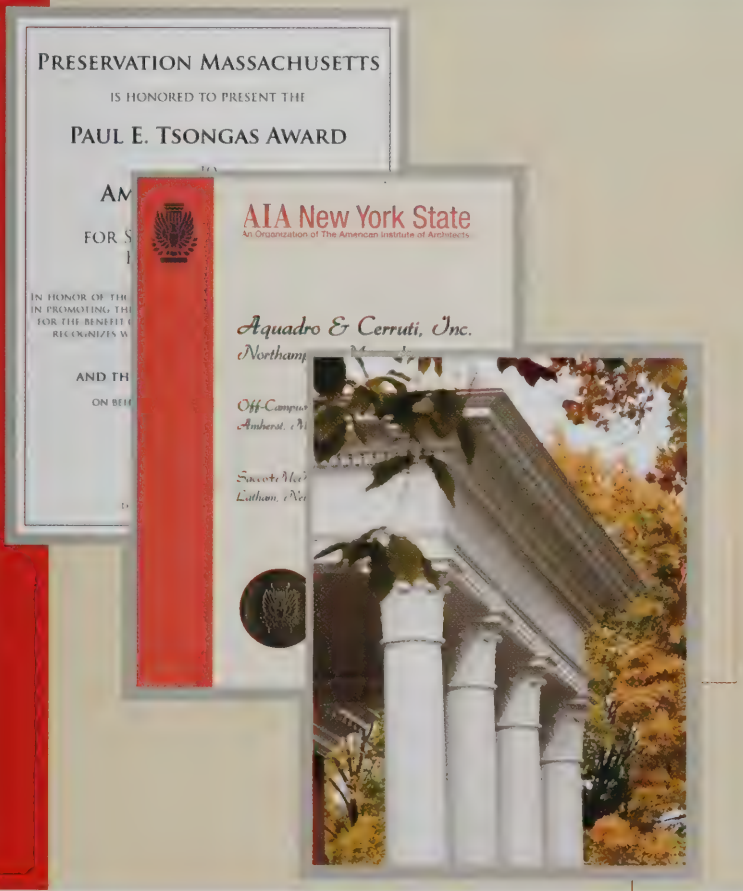
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City Archaeology Program, City of Boston
www.cityofboston.gov/archaeology/default.asp
Did you even know that Boston *has* a city archeologist and a lab with more than a million artifacts? Move over, Cairo!

Sites of Memory
www.sitesofmemory.com
This recent project offers a map-based website and smartphone tours that connect tales of New York City's dead to urban sites. Narrated by a stellar lineup of literary luminaries, it promises to deliver "larger stories about remembrance, mortality, and forgetting," along with an entirely new perspective on Gotham.

The World Memory Championships
www.worldmemorychampionships.com/index.asp
The Olympics has company. The World Memory Championships also travels to London this year, focusing on that other, often out-of-shape muscle, the brain. With competition categories such as Names & Faces, Random Words, and Speed Cards, these athletic games encourage all to start training.

The Trust for the National Mall
www.nationalmall.org
This new nonprofit partner of the National Park Service is working to restore the National Mall—"the Nation's Front Yard" and the connective tissue between some of our most significant monuments. The Trust's recent design competitions at three different sites provide a preview.

World Trade Center Site Memorial Competition
www.wtcsitememorial.org
As we approach the 10-year anniversary of the design competition for the 9/11 memorial, the website is still up. Although the winner is known, are you familiar with its 5,200 competitors? This easily searchable database of competition boards provides a stunning tribute of design energy.

Mt. Auburn Cemetery
www.mountauburn.org
Since 1831, this park-like cemetery has provided respite for the living as well as the dead. It offers elegant examples of changing attitudes about death, and landscape architecture, too. "Beautiful, timeless, and still available."

World Monuments Fund
www.wmf.org
For almost 50 years, in more than 90 countries, this organization has preserved architectural monuments and cultural sites. Check out its "Watch" slideshow of endangered places, "Dig Deeper" into videos and articles, or sign a petition against the demolition of a Paul Rudolph building before it becomes a memory. ■

George D. Callender Square

Conor MacDonald is a writer and photographer whose work has appeared in *Meeting House*, *Edible Boston*, *ArchitectureBoston*, and other publications.



RIGHT
George D. Callender Square. Photo: Conor MacDonald.

All around the tiny, sun-dappled intersection of Callender and Putnam streets, a half-dozen signposts veer this way and that—perhaps a testament to their familiarity with the bumpers of vehicles on these narrow roads. Across the street, however, another marker of the Callender name stands nearly plumb. Both post and sign are artfully constructed and finished in a deep brown, more reminiscent of the Cambridge Parks Department than Traffic and Engineering. The marker bears few words: "George D. Callender Square," followed by rank, date of birth, date and location of death, and a brief comment: "Killed in action."

Hundreds, maybe thousands of these memorial posts appear in city and town directories across New England—at least 1,250 in Boston alone—with many more uncounted. Mike Speridakis. Ernest DiBiase. Anthony Lattazio. The litany of immigrant surnames and all-American first names evokes memories of childhood, like the caption to a photo from some extracurricular activity, maybe a Boy Scout troop or the football team. Like a good diet for the plates of still-expanding bones, these activities were intended to make boys sturdy, gainful, productive. In a way, that's what this roll call is, too: a list of very young men, banded together and sent away to pursue a victory possibly as abstract to them as a goal line.

There are a handful like Callender's, but most of the markers are far humbler. Stamped-steel signs announce dedications of congested intersections, dusty street corners, and quiet forks in the road. Many of these places seem not to have any awareness of being "squares" at all. They've been erected around Boston since 1945, when then-mayor James Michael Curley established a committee for memorializing residents killed in war.

Most squares are dedicated to boys killed in action; some remember the men the survivors became. In Boston, VFW posts now endorse each nomination, but once, all it took was a word from a city councilor—who mostly did and sometimes did not verify that nominees met all the criteria.

Today, commemorations of veterans who died in battle get a star. Those marked with the city seal died after serving. But it isn't clear that every application has been carefully parsed, and every sign may not reflect the correct distinction. Government records are not always accurate. This is fitting, somehow, because memory itself is always shifting and susceptible to interpretation.

Many communities erect singular war monuments of granite, isolated in a park and removed from the lives of both those remembered and those remembering. But these memorial squares occupy everyday places, usually near the homes of those memorialized, as if to suggest that we should remember them as citizens, once as much a part of the fabric of neighborhood life as these intersections are today.

In a city studded with Brattles and Louisburgs and Kenmores, these often sans serif, all-caps assertions may seem to protest too much. If you laid them out on a map, however, they would spread across the state like lace, like a veil. Commonplace in our daily lives, when they are considered in sum they take on a scale and impact to rival any monument.

The Battle of Hürtgen Forest, a bloody conflict that spanned more than four months between September 1944 and February 1945, is the longest battle in U.S. Army history. At least 33,000 were killed or incapacitated in the U.S. Army alone. It was an unusually cold winter, and the 54-square-mile terrain is severe and remote.

George D. Callender was a graduate of Cambridge Rindge and Latin, the son of immigrants from Barbados. Italian newspapers reported he was killed during this battle in the rough, hilly forest on the German-Belgian border, six days after his 22nd birthday. ■

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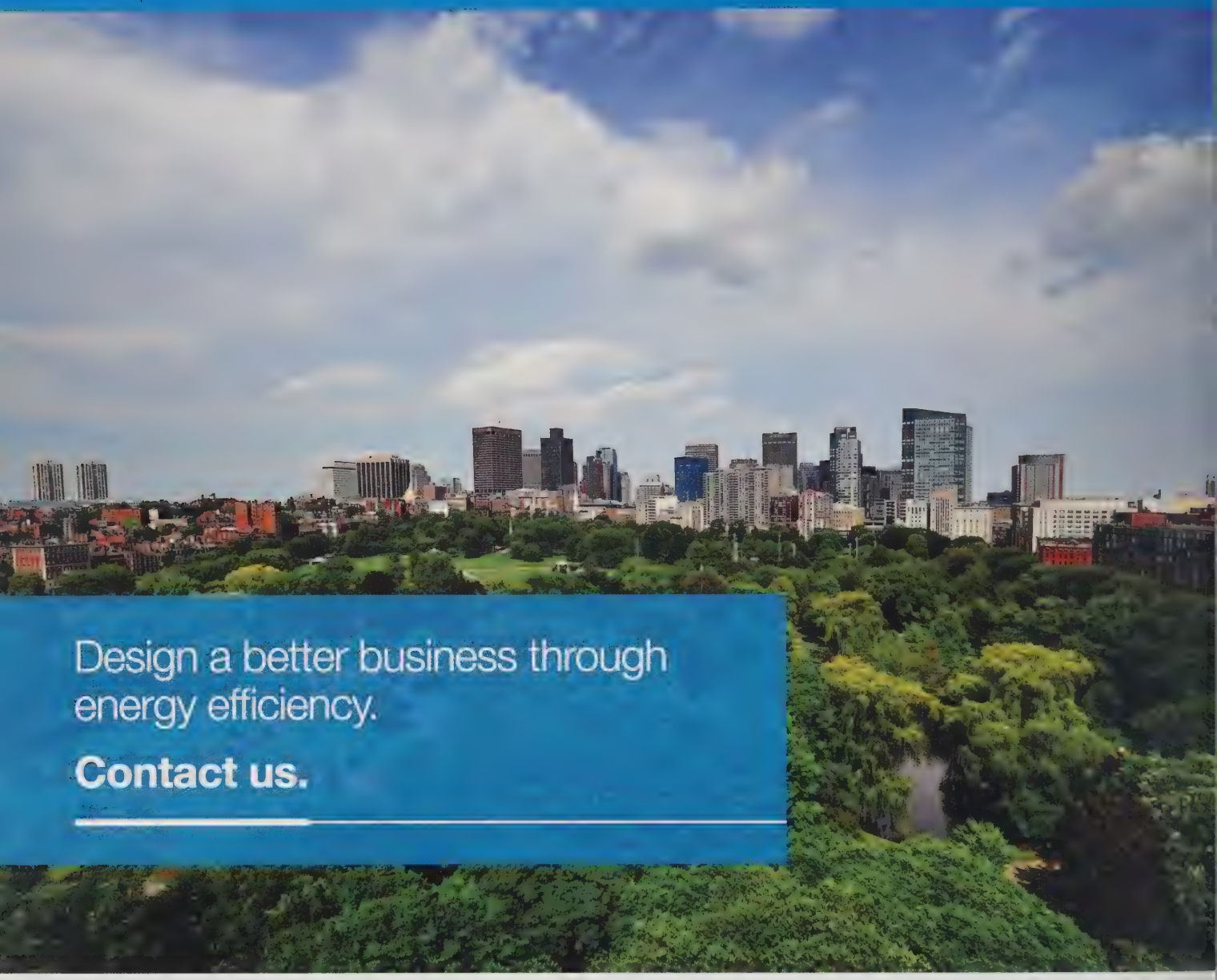
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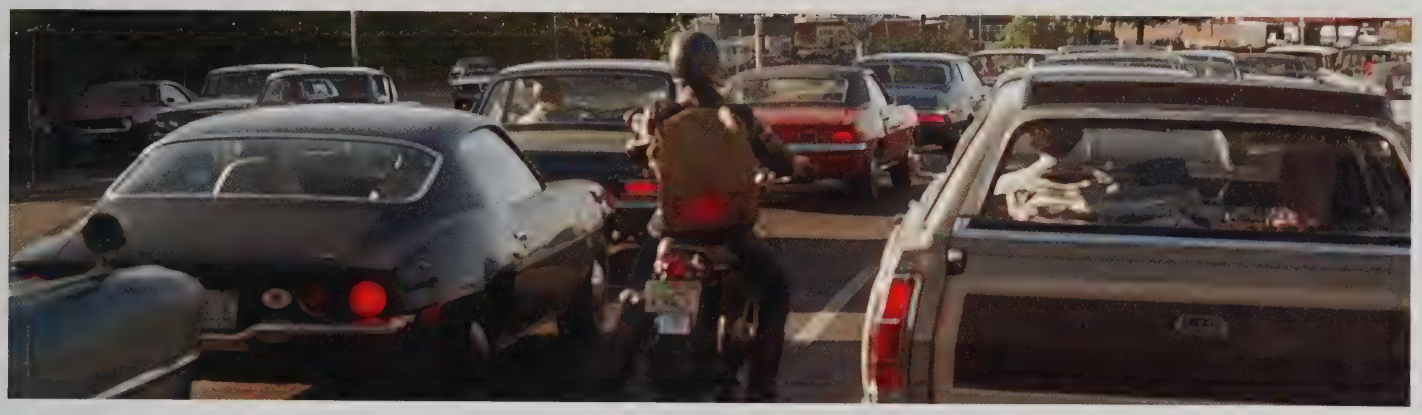
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Turn Signal

ABOVE
Boston, 1971. Photo: Nick DeWolf.

COVER
Detail from a map depicting possible routes of the proposed Inner Belt Highway (Interstate 695), from the *Location Restudy for Interstate Route 695, Inner Belt Highway, Boston, Cambridge, and Somerville*. Prepared for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Public Works by H.W. Lochner, Inc. May 1967. Courtesy the Boston Public Library. Boston Common is to the right.

MORE ONLINE
To see more maps of the proposed highways, visit architectureboston.com

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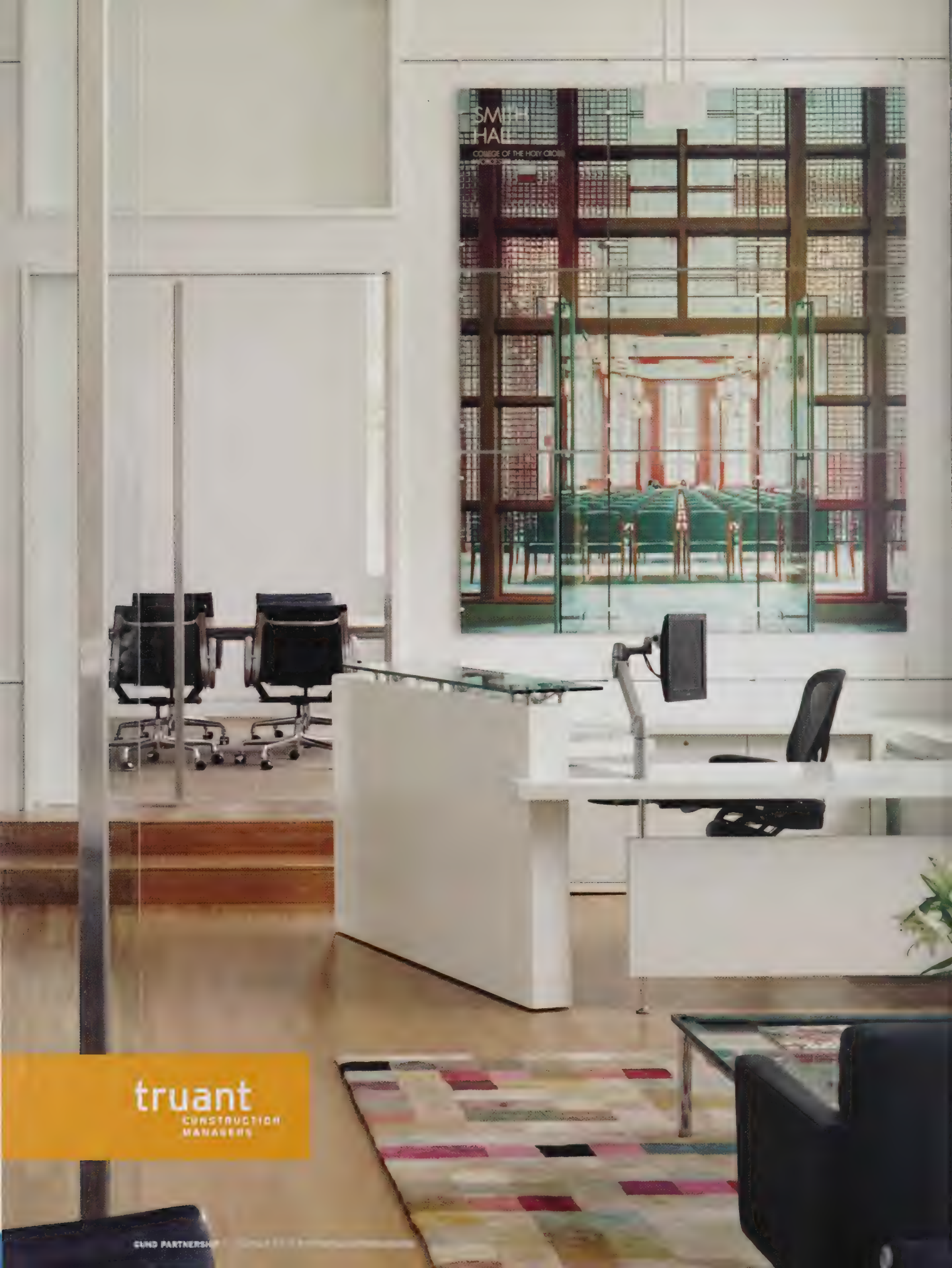
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SMITH
HALL
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truant
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Unbuilt

To fully grasp the significance of a 40-year-old decision to stop highway expansion through Greater Boston, it helps to engage in a bit of alternative history. So let us imagine: What if that ensnaring spider web of new highways *had* been built?

Thirty-eight-hundred homes would have been demolished. Frederick Law Olmsted's Back Bay Fens would have been sliced in half, between the Museum of Fine Arts and the Gardner Museum. Huge swaths of Central Square and Cambridgeport—the nightclubs, bookstores, and coffeehouses—would have been razed.

In their place would have been an eight-lane interstate beltway some 7.3 miles long, according to most plans, with 13 new interchanges; 12-foot emergency shoulders on both sides; and all the noise, grime, and pollution that comes with 55,000 car trips per day.

This is not to mention the long finger of I-95 that would have extended from Dedham north through the city, or the extension of Route 2 into Cambridge. Does anyone think the South End would be one of the most desirable addresses on the East Coast today with a six-lane highway running through it? Or that Kendall Square would be a teeming catalyst for innovation had the Red Line not been extended?

The 1972 decision by then-governor Francis Sargent to halt the highways was visionary not just because it prevented our famously walkable streets from becoming autobahns. It also marked a comprehensive rethink of transportation policy with a shift—in strategy and resources—toward more sustainable public modes of travel.

The comprehensive three-year review that led to Sargent's decision opened a new lens on transportation planning. Beyond vehicle miles and engineering solutions, transportation grew to be about something more: what urbanists call "placemaking" and what politicians call "economic development." As David Lee explains elsewhere in these pages, it became clear that rebuilding the Southwest Corridor, for example, "wasn't a transportation project. It was a *community building* project with a transportation component."

And yet, people do love their cars. The push for new highways continues: a 220-mile road running east–west across Maine; a widened interstate and a new bridge in downtown Louisville. These projects may buck the trend toward density and the rediscovery of authentic urban cores. But they attract a muscular constituency of their own that the urbanists dismiss at their peril.

Here in Massachusetts, debates about how to spend scarce transportation dollars are riven by geographic and class divides. That's led to dreams deferred for greener, more efficient modes of transportation. The MBTA is critically underfunded and overburdened. South Station is already at capacity. Some 30,000 new housing units are planned within a half-mile of current transit or commuter-rail stations, according to the Urban Land Institute. Where will all those people park?



PHOTO: Conor MacDonald

This region needs a big new conversation aimed at getting people out of their cars. But please, not another blue-ribbon commission. We need to try, or at least debate, audacious ideas such as congestion pricing (it's working in London and Stockholm) or a significant hike in the gasoline tax. And we need some juicy carrots, too: public transit that's convenient, fast, affordable, and reliable. How about giving the Silver Line its own dedicated travel lane? Or deep discounts for off-peak travel on the T?

The highway fights of decades past gave ordinary citizens a voice, and the debate was all the better for it. Today's conversation can include the broadest public participation, facilitated by new media and mapping technologies. Young people are the ones who will be living with the transportation choices we make now. Let them have at it.

"You can't stop progress!" comes the cry. Sometimes, though, progress takes a turn. Over the last four decades, Massachusetts has proven—with the Big Dig, for example—that it's possible to unpave paradise. "Progress" always wants to be in dramatic motion: building, rushing, doing. But one lesson of 1972 is that there can be wisdom in undoing.

Renée Loth
Editor







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On "Memory" (Fall 2012)

Hubert Murray's thoughtful essay "Pulverizing the Past" juxtaposes the annihilation of Bosnia's Ferhat Pasha mosque and Boston's West End as cautionary tales. Jane Jacobs deplored the top-down, big plans that led to the destruction of the West End. From her home in Toronto, she subscribed to and read every issue of *The West Ender*, the only living remnant of a once-vital community.

Jacobs' legacy lies not in offering up any formula for city building but in her method of observing and of thinking broadly and comprehensively about specific situations. Since she posited that cities, like plants, grow naturally, maintaining the status quo or preserving the past were not her goals. Change is an inevitable part of the process, and residents of a neighborhood will know best what works and doesn't work. In accordance with Jacobs' ideas, Toronto got rid of most zoning regulations along King Street near its downtown, thus allowing many individuals to naturally and sensibly reuse old warehouse buildings for new purposes. At a Boston College symposium in her honor in 2001, Jacobs advocated "knitting up holes in the [urban] fabric and adding density. Scattered small infill sites add up, yet one of their beauties is that typically they don't interest big wheel developers with deep pockets."

With small-scale changes, there is less chance for giant forces of destruction—with historical memory as collateral damage—to prevail.

GLENNA LANG
Coauthor, *Genius of Common Sense*
Cambridge, Massachusetts

What seems at first blush an outrageous comparison between ethnic cleansing and slum clearance ["Pulverizing the Past"] is thoughtfully explored here. The "aggressive utopianism" that seeks to improve society through modern architecture is surely not as reprehensible as the obliteration of an iconic religious landmark in order to shatter the collective will of a people. But the resulting erasure of a context for daily life and the question of who are the intended beneficiaries—the original inhabitants or "more suitable" newcomers—remain in any case.

Whether by meticulous historical reconstruction or old-fashioned networking, surviving communities assert "we are still here." At the home-grown District Six Museum in Cape Town, South Africa, a tribute to the nonwhite neighborhood displaced by the politics of apartheid, one of the simple and powerful exhibits of shared memory is an obelisk of orphaned metal street signs rising from a pile of construction rubble and flanked by a floor cloth map of the neighborhood, annotated with handwritten reminiscences.

As to the "allure of modernity," we know from alterations made over several decades to Le Corbusier's housing estate at Pessac that transformation of an architect's original vision into a real, lived-in place can represent maturation, rather than repudiation, of the vision.

JACK GLASSMAN AIA
Chair, BSA Historic Resources Committee
Charlestown, Massachusetts

Jane Whitehead's article "Forget Me Not" provided an interesting peek into the complicated evolution of the Armenian Heritage Park's creation. In many Boston neighborhoods, the motivation to activate an underutilized public space is initiated by the desire to memorialize a community event or beloved individual. When designing those spaces, finding a common point of view to articulate can have the added advantage of unifying the different points of view within the community. Combining the aesthetic preferences of a neighborhood with the expertise of an artist/architect team can seamlessly incorporate the wide-ranging scope of the art with the practicalities of public safety, handicap accessibility, and commercial interests.

When planners are willing to use the memorial concept as a stepping-off point instead of an end, it can lead to some interesting solutions. For example, on the Hanover and Blackstone cross streets, Mags Harries' inspired bronze trash (*Asaroton*) celebrates the produce vendors of the centuries-old Haymarket. Just blocks from the Greenway, nestled behind 100 Cambridge Street, is the remarkable Garden of Peace, a collaboration among artist Judy McKie, landscape architect Catherine Melina, and the planning committee, created as a memorial to victims of homicide. The atmosphere of solitude brings a primordial comfort to anyone sitting within this somber setting. With his Armenian Heritage Park, Donald Tellalian should be congratulated for finding an amicable architectural solution for this emotional event placed in a complex area of the city.

SARAH HUTT
Friends of the Public Garden
Boston
Former Director of Visual Arts, City of Boston

There is no doubt that "reproduced" interiors or the "Disneyfication" of public spaces ["Fauxstalgia"] do not push architecture or design forward (or, for that matter, backward) in the attempt to duplicate another period, space, or time. It is the judicious use of authentic, period, or salvage objects—designed and modified with a nod to local history, (re)imagination, functionality, and the newest technologies—that gives significance and makes us care about the spaces where we spend our time.

Steampunk design does exactly that. It infuses modern technology into period objects that celebrate the personal and local history of the space, and those that

lived or worked there before our time. It's the next step up from simply reproducing or repurposing the past. Part philosophy and part aesthetic, steampunk offers solutions to larger conflicts in society through recycling, reusing, and managing issues relating to ecology and the limits of natural and financial resources. We believe steampunk design is about fusing the best of two worlds—repurposing and marrying form and function—to make sure we preserve the past while remaking our future.

Many of us are frustrated with poorly made goods, cheap imitations, black box technology, planned obsolescence, and rampant consumerism. Steampunk design has become an alternative, a design solution to these difficult challenges that encourages repurposing resources and pride in craftsmanship. Many architects and designers have found a particular resonance in these principles and have incorporated them in their own projects and practices. Clients appreciate and will pay for the real luxury of these innovative design solutions. Maybe by thinking a little differently, architects and designers will get to see the world in a whole different steampunk light—to remake and improve the world around us.

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MARK LANDSBERG
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Newton, Massachusetts

With regard to Karen Weintraub's "Memory Palaces" article: Even though there may not be studies of the spatial memories of architects, there's plenty of research evidence that graphic artists have superior visual-spatial imagery capacities. We don't know whether this superior performance is due to genetics, to practice, or to some combination of those factors.

We live in the age of smart digital devices. Whether or not we are endowed with strong visual-spatial skills, our online access to all kinds of spatial information can make all of us into visual-spatial geniuses. (Analogy: whether or not we have good verbal memory, all of us have access to any phone number that we need.) And so, going forward, the questions arise: Will architects now come from a much wider proportion of the general population? Or will those with stronger visual-spatial skills still be more attracted to architecture and still have the edge over the rest of us?

HOWARD GARDNER
Harvard Graduate School of Education
Cambridge, Massachusetts

In exploring the subject of "Memory," *ArchitectureBoston* understandably focused on some of the interesting extremes, including public memorial design, where the objective is a design that is faithful to a specific collective memory and, at another extreme, comfort design, where the general associations required to escape the present require only faux memories. I hope this high altitude discussion sets the stage for a future issue that will delve into the many complexities of architectural practice between the extremes, including technical, cultural, regulatory, and aesthetic. Well-informed and nuanced interpretations of authenticity and integrity are essential, and are especially challenging today as modern buildings are forcing a shift in our thinking about historic significance as it relates to building fabric and the underlying original design idea. Intensive collaboration is always required. Add to all that, the complex application of sustainable practice in the context of historic structures—the most sustainable design being that which not only leverages the embodied energy from the existing structure's original design and construction, but [also] creatively engages its embodied memories and cultural legacy.

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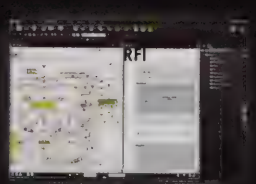
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PHOTO: Louise Kennedy

David **Luberoff**

("The Roads Not Taken," page 28)

David Luberoff is a lecturer in sociology at Harvard University and a senior project adviser to the Boston Area Research Initiative, a joint project of Harvard's Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study and the Rappaport Institute for Greater Boston. He is coauthor (with Alan Altshuler) of *Mega-Projects: The Changing Politics of Urban Public Investment.*



PHOTO: Conor MacDonald

Karilyn **Crockett**

("Street Smart," page 40)

Karilyn Crockett is a Dorchester native and PhD candidate in the American Studies program at Yale. Her dissertation, *"People Before Highways": Reconsidering Routes to and from the Boston Anti-highway Movement* examines the role of neighborhood activists in redefining transportation and land-use planning during the 1960s.

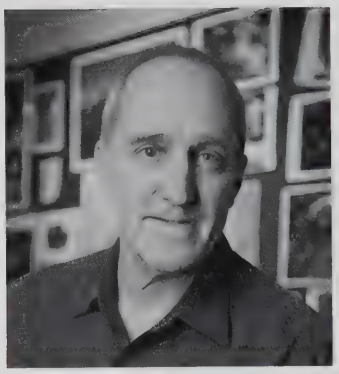


PHOTO: Ken Richardson

Peter **Vanderwarker**

("What Was Saved," page 46)

Peter Vanderwarker is a photographer whose work interprets natural and built environments. He has received Institute Honors from the American Institute of Architects, and support from the National Endowment for the Arts. Last June, he rode his bicycle across the North Cascades.



PHOTO: Will Dolan

Stephanie **Pollack**

("Promises to Keep," page 52)

Stephanie Pollack is associate director of the Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy at Northeastern University, where her research focuses on transportation policy, transit-oriented development, sustainability, and equitable development. She was previously a staff attorney at the Conservation Law Foundation, at the time former governor Francis Sargent served as chairman of the board.

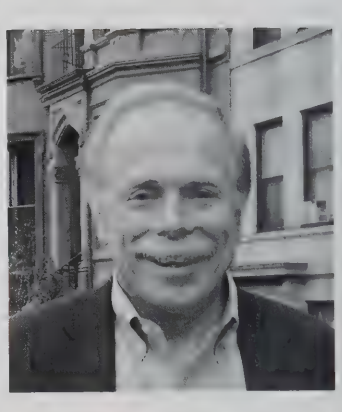


PHOTO: Goody Clancy

David **Dixon** FAIA

("Road Work Ahead," page 56)

David Dixon FAIA has directed the national planning and urban design practice at Goody Clancy for more than 20 years. His Boston projects include planning for 25 Massachusetts Turnpike air-rights parcels, the Fort Point waterfront, the MBTA Fairmount Line, and the Charles River Basin.



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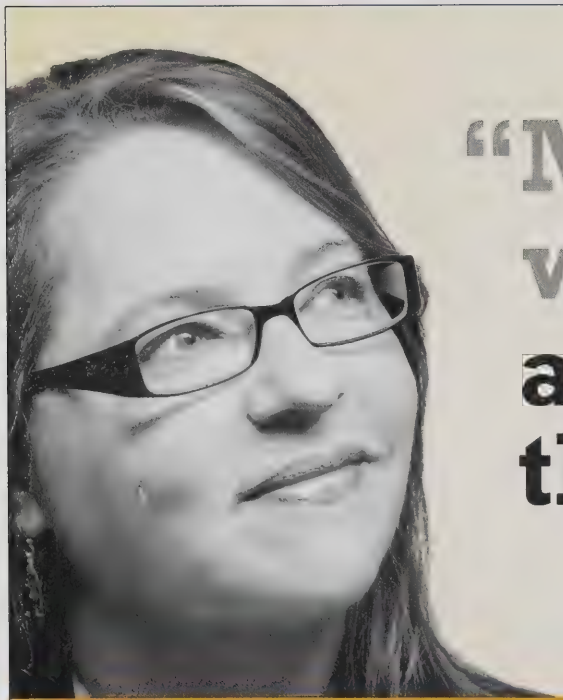
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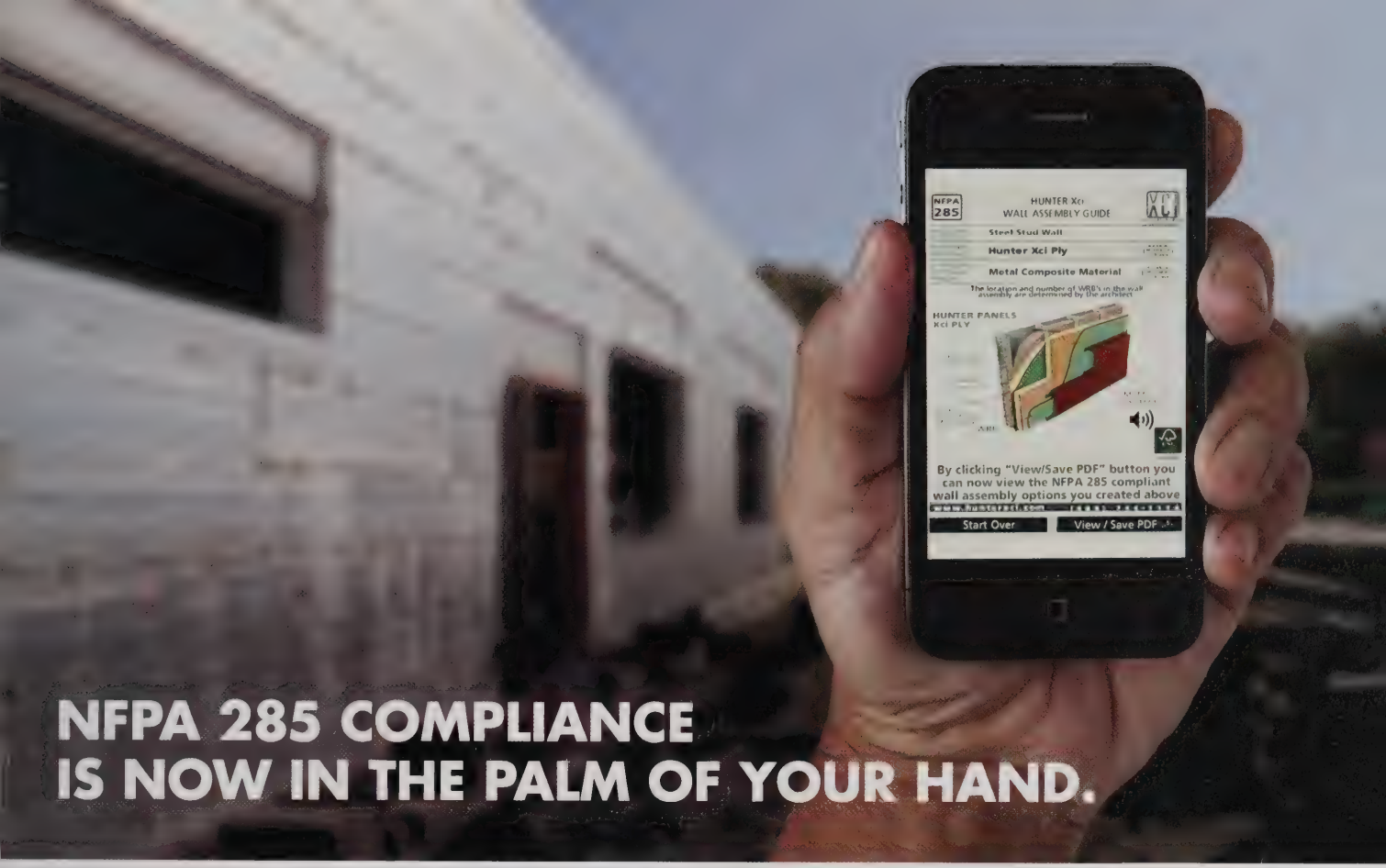


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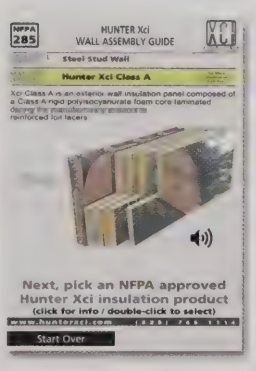
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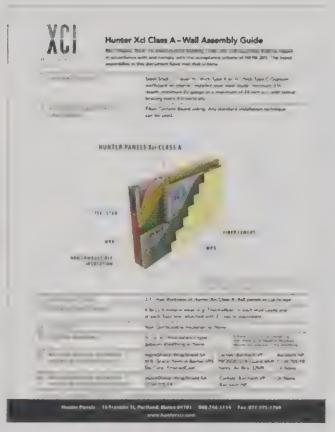
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Erika Zekos ASSOC. AIA is an artist and designer in Amherst and a program coordinator of Learning By Design in Massachusetts.

ABOVE
Carlos Garaicoa, *No Way Out*. Photo: Art Evans.

Invisible Cities

Mass MoCA
North Adams, Massachusetts
April 14, 2012–March 1, 2013

Italo Calvino's novel, *Invisible Cities*, has captured my imagination since my student studio days. The stories of his eloquent traveling character, Marco Polo, invite readers to think about seeing what we can't see. More than the stone beside us and beneath our feet, the architecture of cities is also built of less tangible notions of memory, culture, anticipation, and movement. The 10 artists in Mass MoCA's *Invisible Cities* exhibition also explore those ephemeral concepts.

Some installations look like model cities, using materiality to elicit ideas. Sopheap Pich's Phnom Penh–inspired cityscape, crafted of woven rattan and bamboo vessels that evoke buildings under scaffolding or bombs or fishing baskets, is one such project.

Other artists focus on the experience of place by capturing movement or sound. The hanging, Lebbeus Woods–like structures of Lee Bul are an example, reflecting sunlight, the gallery, and viewers themselves.

The most effective installations are the most site specific. Miha Strukelj uses charcoal to draw on the walls and wires to extend the lines of perspective and structure into the space of the gallery. Kim Faler literally strips away the plaster walls of the museum to expose the brick behind and then builds it up again with studs fashioned from an intensely perfumed soap, warping under their own weight.

Whether Calvino's Polo told stories of far-away cities or simply reimagined his own Venice home, *Invisible Cities* encouraged readers to consider the relationships of people, places, and ideas like no other text. The installations of Mass MoCA's exhibition were inspired by the artists' home cities as far flung as Rome, Havana, Lagos, and Detroit, and like the book, cause us to rethink our own landscape.

Susannah Drake AIA, ASLA is the principal of dlandstudio and professor at the Cooper Union, where she also serves on the CU Institute for Sustainable Design.

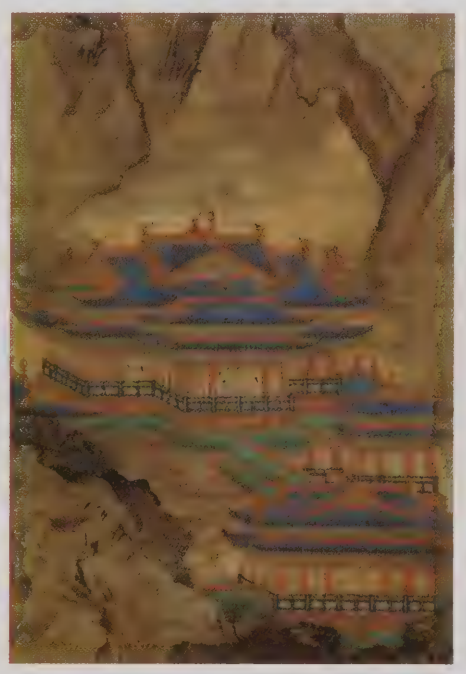
RIGHT
Yuan Jiang, detail, *The Palace of Nine Perfections*, 1691. Courtesy the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Chinese Gardens: Pavilions, Studios, Retreats

Metropolitan Museum of Art
New York City
August 18, 2012–January 6, 2013

Is Petrarch really the father of perspective drawing? One may wonder after viewing these 80 works on Chinese gardens. Extraordinary landscapes that recede into space in atmospheric haze, discrete details painted with masterful command of foreshortening, and theatrical compositions of color characterize many of the works painted over a 1,000-year period. The exhibition starts out strong with Yuan Jiang's *Palace of Nine Perfections*—an extraordinary landscape painted on 12 hanging silk scrolls showing saturated colorful pavilions, courts, and terraces set in a sublime and powerful but generally monochrome Chinese landscape.

The show does not document gardens in a traditional sense and is not organized chronologically. Instead, the works suggest a poetic reading: Landscape and discrete elements created by natural and human means form a pathway to enlightenment. Fragments such as a rock, twisted branch, or plum blossom are equally carefully considered, each resonating with a larger metaphysical meaning.





Seen

Piscinas das Marés
Leça Da Palmeira, Portugal

Ann Pitt is an associate professor at Wentworth Institute of Technology and an architect in Boston.

ABOVE
Leça swimming pools, with the ocean in the background. Photo: Juan Seguí Moreno.

MORE ONLINE
See a slideshow at architectureboston.com

In September, 10 graduate students and I visited the Leça swimming pools, designed by Alvaro Siza. We traveled to the pools during our trip to Lisbon and Porto, Portugal, as part of a special topics studio at Boston's Wentworth Institute of Technology. Walking along the edge between the city and the sea, we caught glimpses of the pools and their relationship to the ocean. It was not until we moved along the sequence the architect had intended that we were able to understand and perceive the whole.

We descended down and entered the changing rooms, compressed and dark with low ceilings and tight walls. Suddenly the city was left behind, and we had no view of what was to come. As we continued along this compressed threshold, the sky opened overhead. We followed a wall that blocked our view; only at its end did it open to reveal the pools set into the natural rock formations. The pools seemed to blend with the ocean as the water levels were at the same height. The pools and the ocean appeared as one, their boundaries blurred.

The fog lifted, the surf became higher, and waves began to break over the pools, mixing the manmade with the natural force of the ocean. We sat perched on the rocks, mesmerized by the waves crashing into the pools. We could imagine Siza walking along, surveying the rocks himself to decide which ones to use as defining moments and where to place his walls. His insight and nature's force were working as one.



ABOVE
The Museum of Modern Art. Jason Crum, *Project for a Painted Wall*, 1969.

Go See

Platforms of Power
The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
September 29, 2012–March 31, 2013

9+1 Ways of Being Political: 50 Years of Political Stances in Architecture and Urban Design
Museum of Modern Art, New York City
September 12, 2012–March 25, 2013

In case the presidential election wasn't enough, a pair of politically inspired exhibitions is sure to satisfy the inner partisan in you. At the MFA, Daniel Rich explores the "link between architecture, nationalism, and political power" in a series of richly detailed paintings. MoMA tackles similar themes in an exhibition mounted from materials in its collection from the past 50 years. Is the political potential of architecture in reflecting the existing power structure or in challenging it? It's a question for discussion; no voting required.

Paved With Imagination

Preview by Ann Sussman

Ann Sussman is an architect and the ArtScape coordinator at the Bradford Mill, an artist and entrepreneurial zone in West Concord, Massachusetts.

RIGHT
Parking Lot Markings, Taunton, Massachusetts (detail). © 2012 Alex S. MacLean/Landslides. www.alexmaclean.com

Julius Caesar created the first off-street parking laws to deal with congestion in Rome, and parking solutions have been paved with unintended consequences ever since. It's about time architects and developers were reminded that parking lots are not just for cars, they are for people, and worthy of more respect and design effort. Ubiquitous in our postwar landscape as ugly swaths of asphalt, surface parking lots in America today serve social and civic functions, too. Here you will find farmers markets, basketball games, teen parties, and even church services.

So believes Eran Ben-Joseph, professor of landscape architecture and planning at MIT, in *Rethinking a Lot: The Design and Culture of Parking*, with a certain urgency. There are, after all, an estimated 500 million surface parking spaces in the US—twice the number of vehicles—and we keep building more of them, mostly of the uninspired variety. The hope is that with encouragement and raised awareness, more project proponents will push for lots that are integrated into a greater design scheme from the start and enhance the landscape as well as our lives.

Ben-Joseph presents many different ways to build lots. Many of the more progressive methods, with shade trees and grass pavers, are in Europe. He also offers a great deal of parking and zoning history to digest, which puts our current predicament in new light. Modern rules of thumb for determining parking ratios lead to parking oversupply by a factor of almost two, one study says. At root, the best lots require us to overcome ourselves and our split personality: at once mild-mannered pedestrians and power-obsessed drivers. Though still rare, peaceful coexistence is possible.





Focus: 50 Books, 50 Covers

These books *are* judged by their covers. Design Observer has joined forces with AIGA and Designers & Books in continuing one of the longest-running awards in graphic design. A panel of 35 design and publishing luminaries—along with the general public—submitted hundreds of nominations to this year's competition. Intriguing, inspiring, and chock-full of graphic elegance (and occasional wit), the books submitted provide evidence of how compelling the visual presentation of information can be.

MORE ONLINE
See an online slideshow of selected architecture and design-related covers at architectureboston.com.

For more on 50 Books, 50 Covers, visit designobserver.com/50Books50Covers.

LEFT
The Altered Landscape: Photographs of a Changing Environment, edited by Ann M. Wolfe. Skira Rizzoli, 2011.











Covering the Issues

Gretchen Schneider AIA is the executive director of the Community Design Resource Center and the deputy editor of *ArchitectureBoston*.

Reduce, reuse, recycle... In this ***Science*** (August 10, 2012) issue on "working with waste," a special collection of articles addresses where it comes from (construction is a top contributor), where it goes, how it differs by country, and how it might be reduced or redirected. Other pieces discuss new technologies that offer means to reuse waste materials, such as toilets that treat sewage at the source or concrete manufactured with carbon dioxide and seawater. From mapping strategies for household and municipal water reduction to the chemistry of metal recycling, there's lots of fodder for the curious layperson and the well-versed researcher alike.

In praise of great design... As the Smithsonian's Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum undergoes a complete renovation, ***Smithsonian*** magazine (September 2012) focuses attention on three leading figures in product design, art, and architecture. Steve Jobs, Ai Weiwei, and Rem Koolhaas all question how we use, think about, and navigate our environment. Biographer Walter Isaacson writes that Jobs was inspired by the architect Eichler and the inexpensive, modern tract houses of his youth. Mark Stevens suggests that Ai's art works and collaborations challenge the design of China itself, and former *New York Times* architecture critic Nicolai Ouroussoff argues that Koolhaas, known for his provocative commentary on urbanism and preservation (and now the countryside), focuses where others haven't yet, at once challenging and embracing the status quo. Lest that all get too heady, complementary pieces on pogo sticks, pink flamingos, and biomimicry suggest that there's still lots of design fun to be had.

The end of the world as we know it?... We've been freaking out over end-times scenarios since 1843, and, well, we're still standing. Things aren't so bad, either. That's Matt Ridley's opening message in "Apocalypse Not," the cover story for ***Wired*** (September 2012). Ridley organizes his crash course in doom predictions into broad categories: chemicals, disease, population, and resources. As he addresses each in turn, Ridley provides a reality check. Neither 1960s DDT scares nor 1970s population doom scenarios panned out, just as air pollution didn't kill urban dwellers, and acid rain hasn't destroyed everything else. So should we disregard today's tough talk on climate change? It's too simple to ignore the debate, concludes Ridley, but solutions will come from innovation, not fear.

School daze... ***Newsweek***'s cover story (September 17, 2012) questions the familiar four-year college experience: with rising costs, fewer jobs, and bigger loans, what is the value? For strong students, higher education ultimately still pays off. But for the average or almost average, it's not clear. Are our increasingly luxurious campuses graduating too many unemployable kids? Meanwhile, ***Boston*** magazine (September 2012) provides an alternative future: knowledge matters more than a diploma. In "School's Out, Forever," Chris Vogel profiles the recent online-education efforts of Harvard and MIT to educate a billion people globally via the Internet, suggesting that higher education is on the cusp of massive change. Many Boston-area architects work in higher education—either as teachers in the numerous design programs or as designers of academic spaces across the world. Maybe it's time for us all to go back to school.

Art and space... ***ArtForum*** (October 2012) offers a thought-provoking discussion on the interaction between art and architecture. Critics Hal Foster and Sylvia Lavin; artists Thomas Demand, Hilary Lloyd, and Dorit Margreiter; architects Steven Holl and Philippe Rahm; and curator Hans Ulrich Obrist all weigh in. This wide-ranging conversation touches on the various ways that museums and galleries support and inspire art, models of collaboration between artists and architects, the exploration of materials, the prospect of spectacle, and the role of public sentiment. Beautiful.

Love Podium

Dan Peterman, PLATFORM 10

deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum
Lincoln, Massachusetts

Inaugural event, September 15, 2012
Installation on view September 2, 2012–October 1, 2013

During election season, candidates speak and analysts give insights. As shortcomings and triumphs of political opponents are revealed, it often becomes difficult to sort through the abundance of information. Perhaps nothing encapsulates this situation better than Dan Peterman's latest art work, *Love Podium*, inspired by the recent presidential election season.

The installation is one piece of the PLATFORM series of shows at the deCordova in which artists are asked to present work that responds to the museum's spaces. Peterman's sculpture is a gray platform made from reused plastic, and on it are two podiums facing outward, in opposite directions. Perfectly situated on the entrance plaza of the museum, it becomes a stand for visitor debates, transforming the plaza into a powerful theater filled with intense social interaction.

The deCordova inaugurated the sculpture on September 15 with help from members of the local community, who were invited to step onto the podium and read aloud their opposing views on a topic. Lexington High School debate-team members were some of the first to engage in lively performance. Two senior debaters—Jerry Chen and Adam Hoffman—stood back to back on the platform and simultaneously read opposing speeches on the subject "Resolved: The United States ought to extend to noncitizens accused of terrorism the same constitutional due-process protections it grants to citizens."

Experiencing *Love Podium* during one of these opening debates is revelatory for speakers and listeners alike. As onlookers walk around the sculpture, listening becomes crucial in order to discern between the two speeches. For participants, the performance becomes practice in learning how to remain focused during times of distraction.

Love Podium is a successful platform for engagement and community building. More important, Peterman's piece is a perfect commentary on the latest political discourse. As visitors recite a variety of texts and struggle to listen, they come away from the experience more aware of the range of perspectives and values that make up this country. They are also encouraged to truly consider a dark side—what it means to speak without being heard and the problems that can arise from a deeply divided public.

Melissa A. Simonetti is a Master of Design Studies candidate at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design.





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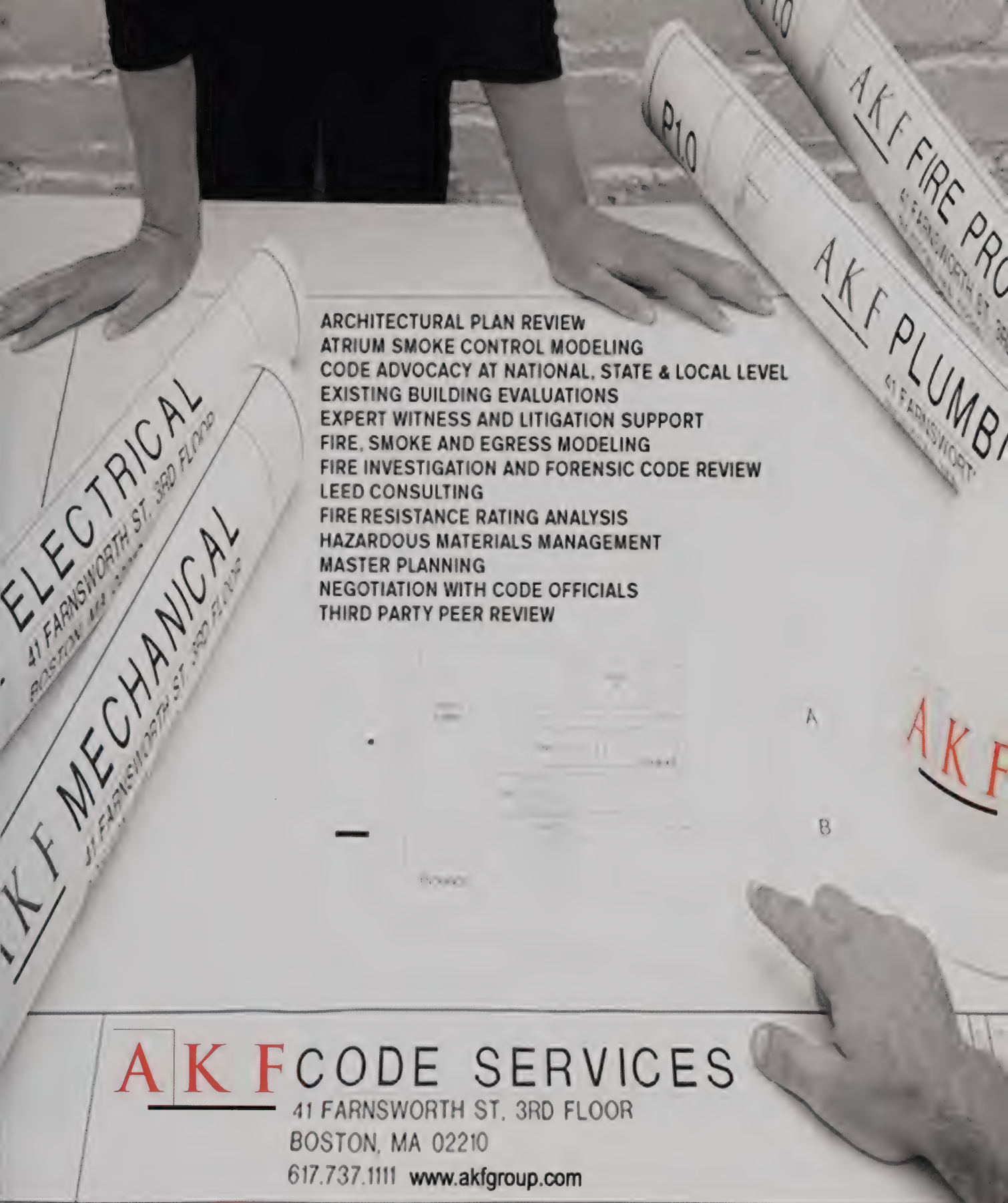
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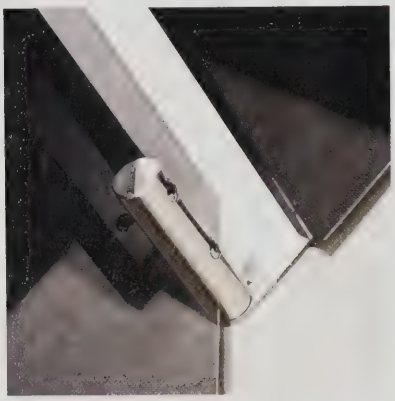
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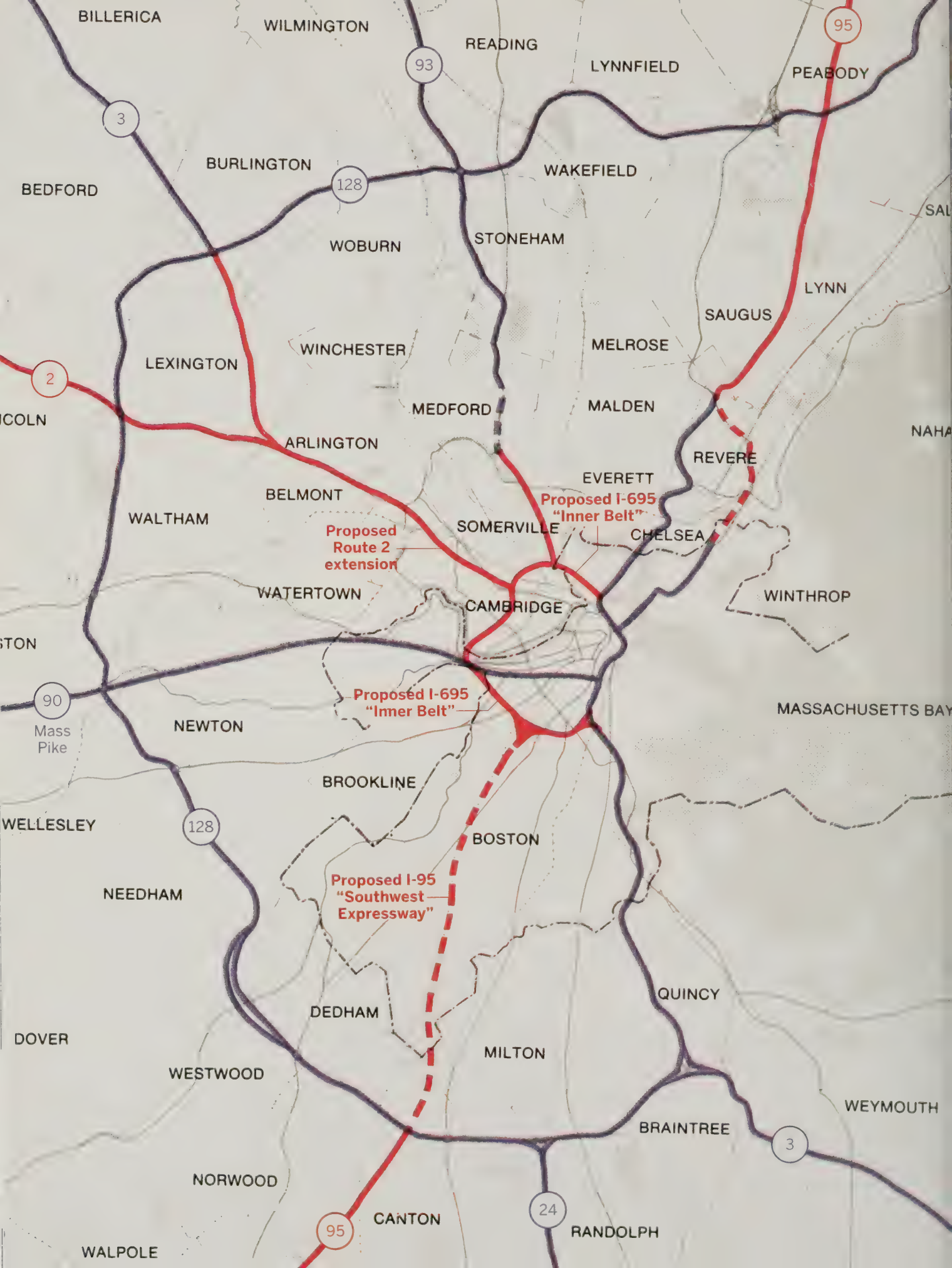
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The Roads Not Taken

How one powerful choice made all the difference

BY DAVID LUBEROFF

OPPOSITE
This map was published in the Boston Redevelopment Authority's *1965/1975 General Plan for the City of Boston*, March 1965. Labels added by *ArchitectureBoston*.

MORE ONLINE
See more maps and renderings of the proposed highways at architectureboston.com

LEGEND

Existing Expressways
- Completed (as of spring 1965)
- Under Construction

Proposed Expressways
- Alignment Proposed or Endorsed by Plan
- Alignment Not Proposed by Plan

In November 1972, an improbable campaign to stop a juggernaut of highways from afflicting Greater Boston reached its culmination. Viewed from today, that victory, which was several years in the making, seems preordained. But consider the landscape of the time:

The state's post–World War II plans, developed as part of the new federal Interstate Highway System, were calling for radial highways into Boston and a circumferential highway well inside the existing Route 128. Major business leaders, contractors, and labor unions were supporting these projects as valuable catalysts for the region's weak economy. The growing legions of motorists, delighting in the open road, were thrilled by the prospect. The state's powerful Department of Public Works (DPW) had strong relationships with key legislators on Beacon Hill. The federal government was offering up to 90 cents for every transportation dime the state spent—but only if it spent the money on interstate highways. It is hardly surprising that every major candidate for governor throughout the 1950s and '60s supported the planned roads.

Arrayed against these forces was a disparate group of local neighbors of modest means and influence. The earliest fights involved the proposed Inner Belt (I-695), which would have passed through parts of Cambridge, Boston, Brookline, and Somerville and taken about 3,800 homes and acres of parkland. Similar controversies soon engulfed other planned roads, notably the Southwest Expressway (I-95 South)—which would have passed through the Fowl Meadow Reservation in Milton, Canton, and Boston and continued through parts of Hyde Park, Roslindale, Roxbury, and Jamaica Plain—and an extension of Route 2 through Cambridge and Somerville. Fights also broke out over the Northeast Expressway (I-95 North), which would have passed through Lynn Woods and several North Shore cities, and over a Third Harbor Tunnel that would surface in East Boston near Logan Airport.

Highway foes were a remarkable mix: longtime, working-class white and black residents of affected neighborhoods; younger, well-educated newcomers who had been active in the civil rights and anti-war movements; liberal academics; and suburban environmentalists. Illustratively, key leaders included Father Paul McManus, a Catholic priest who served in Cambridge and then Mattapan; Chuck Turner, a community activist in Roxbury; James Morey, an engineer who had left a defense-industry job to become a community organizer; and Fred Salvucci, a transportation engineer then working for the Boston Redevelopment Authority.

Although opponents initially focused on individual projects, over time they began to make common cause. Their strategy also shifted from trying to make the roads more palatable, perhaps putting them in trenches partially covered with large decks, to trying to cancel them outright and build more transit instead.

Elected officials began responding to anti-highway forces. Boston mayor Kevin White, who had been elected in 1967, began to question the roads—a position encouraged by Barney Frank, then a senior aide to White. So did a few state legislators, led by Michael Dukakis, who represented Brookline. Congressman Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill, the House majority leader whose district included Cambridge, also sided with opponents.

Meanwhile, however, the DPW plowed ahead, building I-93 in Somerville and taking property for the Southwest Corridor, ultimately clearing more than 150 acres of land, including 775 homes, between Forest Hills and Madison Park. To make matters worse for opponents, in early 1969, Governor John Volpe, a former highway contractor who supported the proposed highways, became secretary of transportation in the new Nixon administration. His replacement, Lieutenant Governor Frank Sargent, not only had served as DPW Commissioner in the mid-1960s but also had led successful efforts to repeal a state law giving localities the power to veto highway projects within their borders. However, Sargent also was a long-time conservationist and Albert Kramer, his chief policy adviser, sympathized with the anti-highway coalition.

On Sargent's inauguration day, White (who was preparing to run against him for governor) called for the withdrawal of the Inner Belt and the Southwest Expressway plans. Two days later, hundreds of anti-

highway demonstrators came to the State House. Sargent spoke to the crowd and, after meeting privately with some of them, announced that the projects would not proceed until his staff reviewed them.

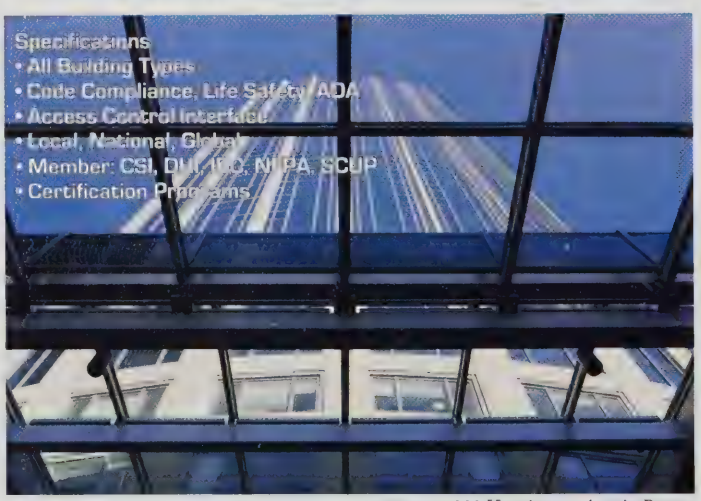
Several months later, Sargent appointed a task force to review the highway plans, to be chaired by MIT professor Alan Altshuler. In January 1970, the task force reported that highway planning had become a "pathological" process, adding, "to be blunt, we perceive a great mindless system charging ahead. The interstate highways within Route 128 will be built as planned… not because they are the best public investment—or even the best highway investment—for the money. They will be built solely because they involve ten-cent dollars from the state standpoint."

The task force urged Sargent to halt work on controversial expressways and to order a comprehensive review of the region's transportation needs. A month later, Sargent accepted these recommendations, explaining in a February 1970 statewide television address, "Nearly everyone was sure that highways were the only answer to transportation problems for years to come. But we were wrong."

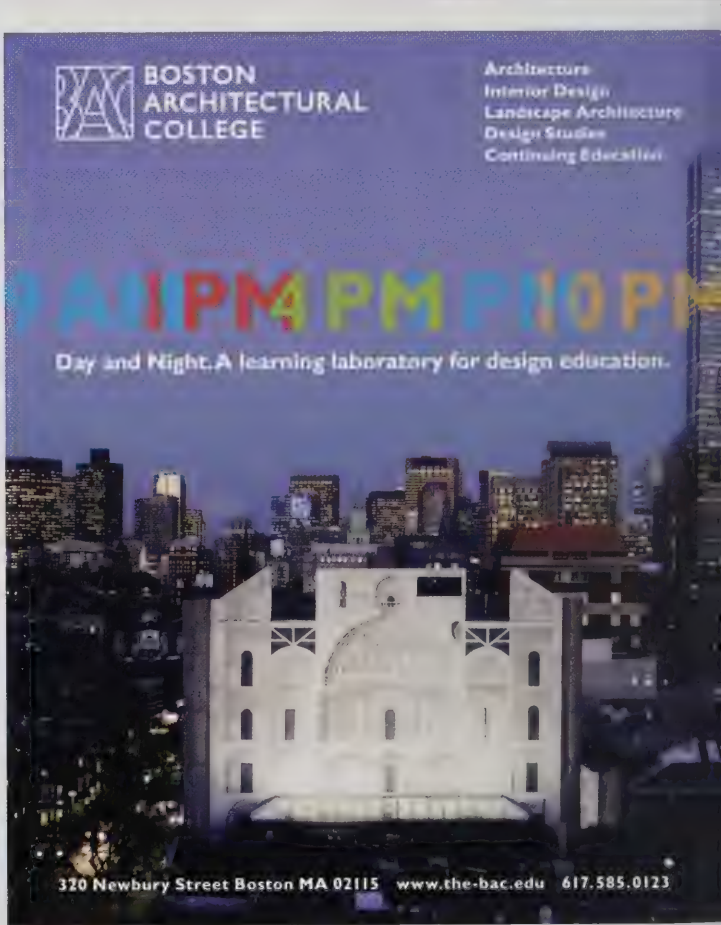
After the speech, Altshuler and John Wofford, a young lawyer who served as the task force's executive director, began working with a large advisory group to design the promised comprehensive review. The aim, Wofford later explained, was to develop a "wide-open process, carried out in fishbowl style, with extensive involvement of neighborhoods, private interest-based organizations, and local government officials, as well as state agencies." Officially launched in July 1971 using $3.5 million in federal funding, the Boston Transportation Planning Review (BTPR) had several notable features:

- Mandate: Although the roads had been planned since the late 1940s, everything was on the table.
- Scope: Although trying to look at the region as a whole, the BTPR primarily focused on options within each contested corridor.
- Involvement: Although the BTPR used many expert consultants, it also actively involved a wide range of concerned citizens in meaningful ways.
- Criteria: In contrast to the DPW's singular focus on moving the most people at the least cost, the BTPR assessed projects' economic, environmental, and social impacts.
- Product: Rather than producing one program justified in technical terms, the BTPR asked the governor to choose from packages that emphasized different values and political priorities.

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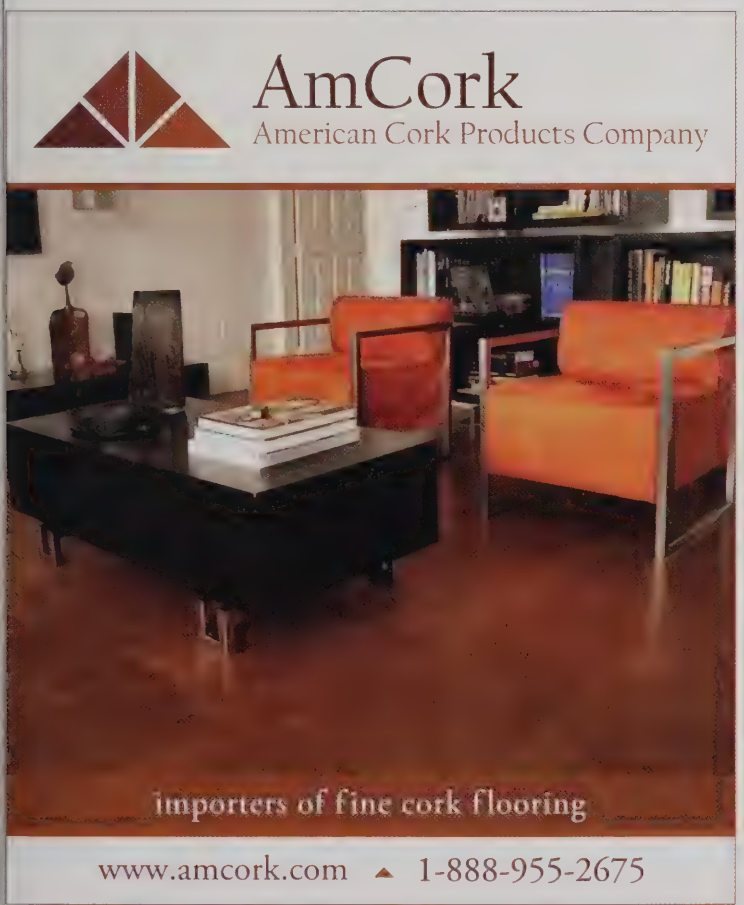


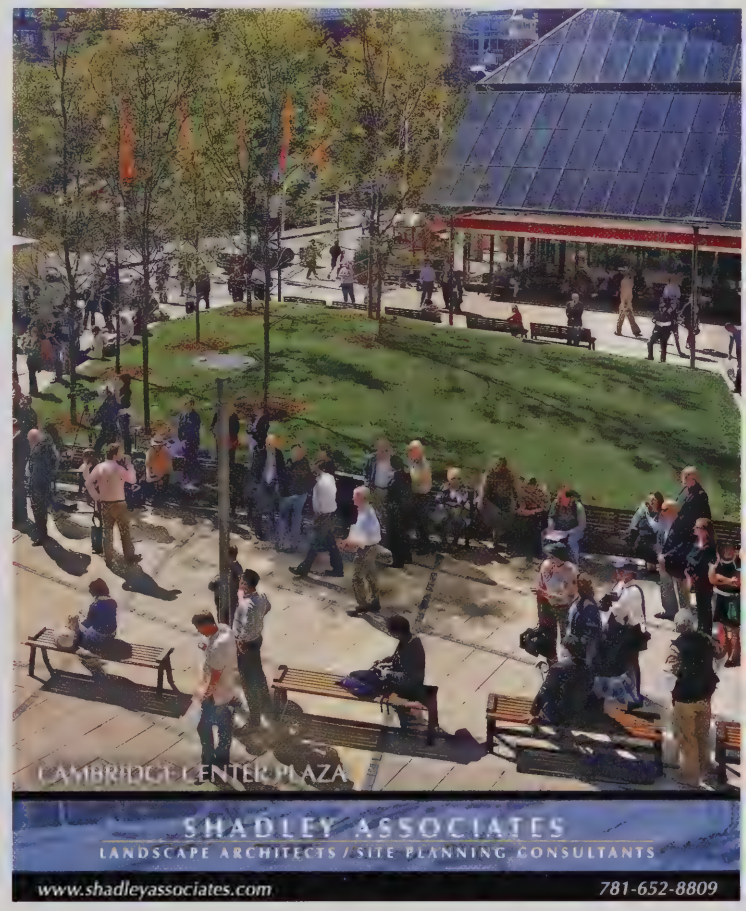
Four months after the process began, Sargent accepted the staff's recommendation to cancel the Inner Belt and the Route 2 extension because they could not be built without unacceptable amounts of disruption; to limit remaining highways inside Route 128 to no more than six lanes; and require that any new cross-harbor tunnel portal be located at Logan Airport.

The BTPR, now under Wofford's direction and with urban design assistance from Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, examined three strategies for meeting mobility needs in the contested corridors, from scaled-down highways to no highways at all. There was little consensus on how to proceed. Business interests pressed for the scaled-down roads. Altshuler, whom Sargent had appointed the state's secretary of transportation in June 1971, backed managed highways open only to buses, trucks, and emergency vehicles. The anti-highway forces, along with Kramer and Wofford, pushed the no-build approach.

After a period of intense staff debate, in 1972 Sargent endorsed an almost pure no-build strategy that emphasized significant expansions in the region's transit system as well as a two-lane, special-purpose tunnel from downtown to Logan Airport. He also called for further study of a nascent idea to replace the elevated Central Artery with a depressed facility that would include a train connection between North and South stations. Sargent also endorsed further study of several lower-priority projects, including the Urban Ring, a circumferential transit line that basically followed the route of the abandoned Inner Belt highway, extending the Green Line to Somerville and extending other transit lines to satellite parking facilities on Route 128.

Sargent's decisions drew national attention and became a model for many other locales. Forty years later, their significance is even more apparent. Physically, the state expanded the MBTA, built the Big Dig, and preserved many vibrant neighborhoods. Subsequent planning processes—in Boston and beyond—all incorporate significant and frequently frustrating requirements for citizen participation and wide-ranging analyses of project impacts. And the controversies that spawned the BTPR produced a generation of leaders who shaped transportation and urban policy in Boston and beyond. The lasting impact created by this combination of projects, policies, and people is a remarkable legacy for what began as a quixotic effort to halt a seemingly unstoppable force. ■





Ripple Effects

Few policy decisions have had as much effect on placemaking as the transportation rethink of the early 1970s in Boston. But the highway moratorium's influence is still being felt far beyond Route 128. We asked six planners, designers, and activists to trace the echoes.



Following the Money

by Alan Altshuler

Alan Altshuler is a professor at Harvard's Kennedy School and Graduate School of Design, and was Massachusetts secretary of transportation from 1971 to 1975.

Governor Frank Sargent's decision to stop all highway construction planned inside Route 128 saved Greater Boston neighborhoods, enhanced the city's core, and spawned the movement to depress the Central Artery—the Big Dig. Less well known, perhaps, is that it also generated nearly $1.5 billion in federal transit aid, which played a critical role in the development of Greater Boston's mass transit during the decades that followed.

In the course of pursuing a more transit-oriented future for Boston, Sargent found it necessary to pursue an aggressive legislative agenda in Washington, DC. But his federal activism was born largely of desperation. When he announced his expressway moratorium, Massachusetts stood to lose nearly $700 million in federal highway aid—roughly equivalent to $4 billion in today's dollars—that was available only for interstate highway construction. If that federal financing were lost, Sargent knew it would be a serious blow to the state economy and a cutting weapon for his critics.

There was a precedent, however, for avoiding the loss of funding when a highway segment was canceled. In 1967, Congress had authorized states to replace controversial interstate segments, on a mile-for-mile (not dollar-for-dollar) basis, with other expressway projects. We argued that the federal government itself had contributed to the impasse over expressway construction in Boston, having enacted strong legislation requiring citizen participation and environmental reviews for federally aided infrastructure projects and imposing targets for air-pollution control. It was impossible, we maintained, to comply with these new laws while also building the proposed interstates covered by Sargent's moratorium.

And if the roads were not to be built, we reasoned, the clear need in Massachusetts was for mass transit investment rather than alternative expressways. Thus was born the idea of Interstate Transfer: that states should be permitted in specified circumstances to reprogram funds for alternative mass-transit (or highway) projects.

Getting this idea passed into law involved several years of political pulling and tugging. Thomas "Tip" O'Neill, then majority leader of the US House and a critic of the planned roads, leaned on the chairman of the House Public Works Committee to green-light our proposal. In the Senate, we played on every relationship we could find, no matter how obscure. The upshot was that Interstate Transfer, generally labeled "the Massachusetts provision," was enacted as part of the Highway Act of 1973, and Massachusetts eventually received $1.46 billion in special grants for mass-transit investment.

Interstate Transfer had a profound effect on the resolution of highway controversies across the country, because it removed the pro-road argument that rejecting an interstate would cost a given community 90 percent in federal reimbursement. In the quarter-century after 1973, federal Interstate Transfer grants totaling $6.83 billion were distributed to 23 metropolitan areas—and 343 Interstate expressway miles were withdrawn.

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PHOTO SERIES

Photographer Nick DeWolf (1928–2006) was an engineer, entrepreneur, and what used to be called a "shutterbug." His archive of more than 43,000 images (many, like these, of Boston in the 1970s) are collected and lovingly curated by his son-in-law, Steve Lundeen, at www.flickr.com/photos/dboo.

A Contagion of Good Ideas

by Anthony Flint

A fed-up populace and an awakened government stopped a scythe of highways from slicing through much of Boston, but it was too late for the elevated Central Artery, built from 1951 to 1959. It took another few decades, but some of the same visionaries who turned away from the madness of urban highways—inspired by Jane Jacobs and her defeat of Robert Moses' Lower Manhattan Expressway—also pioneered the logical next step: reinventing and dismantling the disruptive downtown highways that *were* built.

The $16 billion Big Dig carries all kinds of baggage these days, from cost overruns to design flaws and the continuing need to replace key components, such as lighting. The project's heart was in the right place, however. The Rose F. Kennedy Greenway now graces the corridor. Some in current generations have no idea the other Green Monster was ever there.

It was an audacious vision from the start, but prescient: the rest of the nation is only now catching up. Tearing down urban freeways has become a standard part of the urban planning playbook for American cities, from Milwaukee (Park West) to New Orleans (Claiborne Expressway), and from New York City (Sheridan Expressway) to Seattle (Alaskan Way Viaduct).

In most locations, the Big Dig model is far too expensive. New York City tried something similar with Westway—and, indeed, Boston effectively grabbed some federal funding for that project once New York gave up on submerging its highway. So in recent years, cities have been engaged in a sort of Big Dig without the Big Dig: converting elevated freeways and long off-ramps and connectors to multimodal, pedestrian- and bike-friendly urban boulevards.

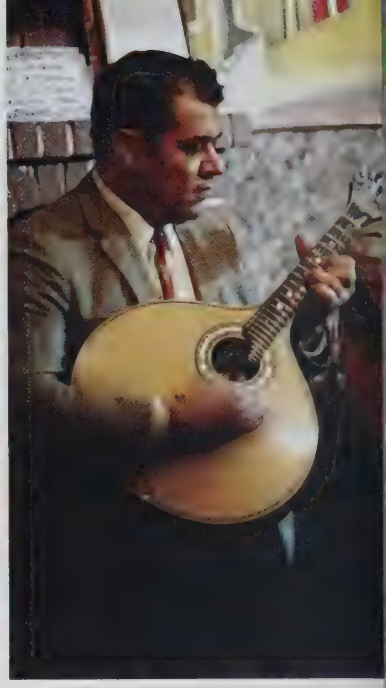
The honor of the very first execution of such a project goes to Portland, Oregon, where Governor Tom McCall turned Harbor Drive into Waterfront Park beginning in 1974. The 1989 earthquake in San Francisco precipitated the glorious Embarcadero. Seattle has been immersed in a long and arduous debate about the looming and similarly earthquake-prone Alaskan Way Viaduct. Yet the idea of getting rid of an urban-renewal-era freeway and replacing it with a boulevard is no longer outrageous.

It is almost with some pity, like the older brother who has already been through high school, that Bostonians read news that Philadelphia is just now probing a similar transformation of I-95 along that city's waterfront. Been there, done that—and we're sorry, sort of, that we took all the money. What can we say: We were early adopters in correcting the mistakes of the past.

Anthony Flint is a fellow and director of public affairs at the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy and author of *Wrestling with Moses: How Jane Jacobs Took On New York's Master Builder and Transformed the American City* and *This Land: The Battle over Sprawl and the Future of America.*







Birth of an Activist

by Ann Hershfang

Having managed air, sea, transit, ferry, rail, and highway agencies, **Ann Hershfang** in 1990 turned to man's original transportation mode and co-founded WalkBoston, the first pedestrian advocacy organization in the country.

The victory of the anti-highway movement—its energy, strategizing, sense of ownership and power—spawned many public-service careers, including the last 38 years of mine.

My trajectory had been traditional for the era—editor, teacher, wife—when in 1965 my husband and I bought at auction a boarded-up house on a short block in Boston's South End. In 1969, after three-plus exhausting years of stripping and painting, I attended a presentation by the advocacy group Urban Planning Aid about highway plans for the end of our street, only six houses away, in what was then the Penn Central rail corridor. The plan was to end rail service at Forest Hills and replace it with eight lanes of an I-95 extension and a four-lane South End Bypass road with three Orange Line tracks, bringing us 900-plus trains and 40,000 cars each day.

Forty-four houses would be taken. On/off ramps at West Newton and Dartmouth streets would spew traffic into and across the South End. Volunteers were solicited. My hand shot up.

Four of us became the Tubman Area Planning Council. With our focus on the Bypass, we collaborated with like-minded people from widely differing communities through the Greater Boston Committee on the Transportation Crisis. The committee's efforts to persuade then-mayor Kevin White to oppose the Bypass were fruitless—until he bargained for three Ward 4 Democratic Committee votes in his 1970 quest to become governor. So much for all our letters, petitions, demonstrations, and meetings!

On November 30, 1972, frozen with hope and suspense, we watched the television as Governor Frank Sargent killed the plans—and one reason he gave was that the Mayor wouldn't build the Bypass. We exploded with joy.

The experience changed my life. It brought me into the public sphere and gave me colleagues, awareness, exposure, and public-speaking experience. In 1974, Sargent appointed me to the Massachusetts Port Authority board, the first woman on any state transportation board. We fired Edward J. King as Massport's executive director, discarded the agency's traditional hostility to its East Boston and Winthrop neighbors, and voted the most progressive masterplan and policies anywhere: noise-proofing, flight-path changes and curfews, no expansion of airport boundaries. We gave Belle Isle Marsh to the state as conservation land; donated millions to the East Boston Neighborhood Health Center; and paid a first, large Payment in Lieu of Taxes to the City of Boston. These programs reflected a new understanding of the role of transportation in urban environments.

The 1980s brought more influential positions in transportation policy. As state undersecretary of transportation, my portfolio was broad: regional transit and airports, elderly and disabled services, starting the Hingham ferry and commuter trains to Providence, open-space purchases, the occasional ride in the state helicopter! In 1988, Governor Michael Dukakis appointed me to the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority board, where I developed a landscape-management program. There, I coordinated the installation of a plaque outside the Roxbury Crossing Orange Line MBTA station to celebrate the anti-highway movement. The names of 166 participants are inscribed across the top.









Beginning With "No," Getting to "Yes"

by Fred Salvucci

One of the many remarkable things about the anti-highway coalition was that, beginning with a most appropriate "No" to interstate highways that would have devastated neighborhoods and open spaces from Milton to Cambridge to Lynn, it also led to a resounding "Yes" to improved and expanded transit and commuter rail in the Boston metropolitan area.

Contrary to the conventional view, the shift of transportation policy away from destructive highways benefited not just Greater Boston but a wide swath of the state, establishing 13 regional transit authorities that stabilized and improved public transportation from Fall River–New Bedford to Pittsfield and North Adams. Responsible highway construction that spared urban neighborhoods helped revitalize the economies of communities like Worcester (I-190), and Lowell and Taunton (I-495).

Remarkable leadership, both outside and inside the government, made this possible. Early elected leaders included Mike Dukakis, then a state representative from Brookline, who fought against the Inner Belt but also argued *for* focusing highway resources *outside* Boston, to weave cities like Worcester, Lawrence, and Taunton into the region's economy. "Outsiders" such as Father Frederick McManus, a low-key but inspiring parish priest from Cambridge who had the courage to say "no" to the Inner Belt—and the skill to bring Richard Cardinal Cushing to the community side in the fight—also had the wisdom to heed the advice of "insiders" like Justin Gray of the Cambridge city government. Father Tom Corrigan led the effort to knit together urban activists from Jamaica Plain, Somerville, the South End, and East Boston, with League of Women Voters chairwoman Ann Hershfang, and suburban advocates of wetland protection and commuter rail, like George Bailey of Sharon and Elizabeth Houghton of Milton.

With the advice of insiders like Barney Frank, Al Kramer, and Guy Rosmarin, the coalition became multi-ethnic and ecumenical, which allowed political leaders such as Mayor Kevin White to advocate forcefully and Governor Frank Sargent to change his position, stop the urban highways, and shift priority to transit.

Insiders like Alan Altshuler implemented the new policy brilliantly, securing legislation to reorganize the MBTA and establish the regional transit authorities, change federal law and the Massachusetts state constitution to allow the gas tax to be used for transit as well as highways, relocate the Orange line, provide the Orange and Blue lines with new equipment, and acquire and refurbish the commuter-rail network. Tony Pangaro managed the rebirth of the Southwest Corridor into a living, breathing neighborhood, paid for with the money that would have gone into the Inner Belt and Southwest Expressway.

"Outside" leaders successfully collaborated with "insiders" to produce the base of political support that both encouraged and allowed the political leaders to deliver. Today, open-space lovers who enjoy the Lynn Woods, the Milton Fowl Meadow, the Boston Fens, Rose F. Kennedy Greenway, and the Southwest Corridor park system; commuter-rail riders from Needham and other suburbs; economic developers from Kendall Square and the South Boston Waterfront to Quincy and Lowell and Worcester *all* have benefited from that unprecedented leadership.

Fred Salvucci teaches transportation policy at MIT. He was East Boston Little City Hall manager for Mayor Kevin White and served three terms as state secretary of transportation for governor Michael Dukakis.







Crossing Boundaries

by David Lee FAIA

David Lee FAIA is an architect and urban designer. His firm served as coordinating architect for the Southwest Corridor project and was the architect for the Ruggles MBTA Station.

Between 1966 and 1969, more than 100 acres of land was cleared in the Roxbury and Jamaica Plain neighborhoods in anticipation of an eight-lane highway and an Inner Beltway through a portion of Olmsted's historic Emerald Necklace. Fortunately, the 1960s also was a time when many were beginning to challenge ill-conceived urban-renewal and highway projects that were destroying city neighborhoods with little regard for the views of local residents.

In Boston, progressive academics, planners, and architects began working directly with residents who were unhappy with the toll the demolition was taking on their neighborhoods. In the background, a nascent anti-busing movement was heightening racial tensions throughout the city.

It was into this complex social and political web that the Stop Highway I-95 movement emerged. Across racial and ethnic boundaries, a coalition began to form with the intention of stopping further highway clearance. Through effective community organizing and savvy media strategies, they got the attention of politicians.

A diverse group arrayed against the highway persuaded then-governor Frank Sargent to reconsider all of the highway and transportation initiatives planned inside Route 128. The highway option was taken off the table, and the Southwest Corridor "Transit" Project was born.

Quickly a new planning paradigm emerged. This was not a transportation project principally governed by engineering expediency. This was something new; this was a *community development* project with a transportation *component*. Once everyone began to view the project through that lens, land-use planning, landscape architecture, and urban-design considerations gained equal footing. This was reinforced by the MBTA's Southwest Corridor Project office, which managed one of the most elaborate community participation efforts in the history of the state.

In the 25 years since rail service began—with transit, commuter rail, and Amtrak trains running in a combination of open boat sections and under landscaped decks—this once-desolate scar in the city's fabric has evolved as a welcoming place to live, work, study, and play. The four-mile linear park that runs from the Back Bay/South End station to Forest Hills station connects a series of active and passive spaces including tot lots, playgrounds, tennis and basketball courts, and a well-used bike path, all shared across boundaries of age, race, and ethnicity. The section of the park between Massachusetts Avenue and Dartmouth Street is a hidden green gem well worth the walk.

Parcels on either side of the corridor that languished in the years of uncertainty about the highway have become fertile opportunities for community-development corporations. Other projects along the armature of the corridor include Roxbury Community College, the Reggie Lewis Track, the Boston Police Headquarters, and Northeastern University's new international student dormitory.

The Southwest Corridor is an unfolding success that endures as a tribute to passionate residents, creative designers, and enlightened public officials who managed to work collaboratively—and at a troubled time—to find common ground where little existed before.







Inspired Action, From Boston to Brazil

by Ken Kruckemeyer AIA

Can the lessons learned in Boston 40 years ago—that poor, urban neighborhoods can be made to thrive through inspired local development with support from government, public agencies, and private business—be applied worldwide?

Many people in the sprawling São Paulo neighborhood of Ermelino Matarazzo dream of a new expressway or a subway line that would speed them to city necessities that are now two or three hours away. Both are unlikely, as this neighborhood—grown from a small village to more than 200,000 residents—receives little attention from a government, and from private utilities, that concentrate their energies in the wealthier and more politically powerful central areas of Brazil's largest city.

So in August of this year, a small group of professionals who met through the Loeb Fellowship at Harvard's Graduate School of Design began collaborating with local colleagues and neighborhood residents to develop a different vision. A series of workshops focused on the potential of immediate, local action that could improve daily life. What can be done that makes the neighborhood itself better able to satisfy everyday needs?

The discussion focused on local challenges—how to make a hilly neighborhood more walkable, to improve connectivity and safety for bicyclists, and to increase the effectiveness of bus service—and on changes that people themselves might accomplish.

Many streets of this neighborhood are quite steep, for example, and because sidewalks are frequently irregular, most people and anything with wheels use the street. A rendering by one of our colleagues showing a safety zone for pedestrians—created by painting the surface and moving some house plants out into the street—got people thinking. What could they do to rethink the meaning of the "public right-of-way?" Wouldn't the neighborhood stores, the clinic, and the school all seem much closer and more accessible if everyone could walk safely in the street?

The specifics are yet to be figured out, but more than 100 residents of Ermelino Matarazzo have signed up and are now thinking and talking about how to instigate change in their neighborhood.

In Boston, this belief in the viability of urban neighborhoods was the essence of what community activists brought to the table in our interaction with the professionals of the Boston Transportation Planning Review. Today Boston has little of the dysfunction characteristic of many American cities: miles of parking lots and vacant land separating the core from the suburbs.

In recent years, many in government seem to have lost some of this belief in the importance of people and neighborhoods; preferring, instead, to direct their efforts toward corporations and the politically and financially powerful. Yet at the grassroots level, attention to the details that make life more productive, safer, and delightful is gaining steam. Creating the opportunity for neighborhoods such as Mattapan or Everett, (or Ermelino Matarazzo) to thrive means not only better mobility to destinations in the rest of the city but also improved accessibility *within* the neighborhood. This is how an entire metropolitan area becomes well educated, healthy, and economically viable.

Ken Kruckemeyer AIA was active in the anti-highway fights of the 1960s, beginning a lifetime of making transportation work for people. He is a founding member of the LivableStreets Alliance.

HEROES OF THE REVOLUTION

Ten savvy advocates and how they grew

Barney Frank

1968
Chief of staff to Mayor Kevin White

1972–80
"Nuclear Isn't Everything"; elected state representative, Boston

Anthony Pangaro

1973–80
Manager, Southwest Corridor project; Orange Line relocation

John Wofford

1969
Executive director of the Governor's Task Force on Transportation

1971–73
Director, Boston Transportation Planning Review

1977–79
Deputy General Counsel, US Department of Transportation, Carter administration

Charlotte Kahn

1970s
Lower Roxbury community activist; South End Project Area Committee

Barbara Ackerman

1972–73
First female mayor of Cambridge; anti-highway activist

1978
Democratic primary candidate for governor



1970

1980

Stephen Crosby

1970
Legislative assistant, Francis Sargent administration

1979
Campaign manager, Kevin White for mayor

Thomas Corrigan

1970
Co-chair, Greater Boston Committee on the Transportation Crisis

1975–78
Parish priest, East Boston

1980
Administrative director Connecticut Citizen Action Group

Albert Framer

1970
Chief policy adviser to Governor Francis Sargent

Mel King

1967
Director, the New Urban League of Greater Boston; anti-highway activist



1972–83
Political office: state representative and candidate for mayor of Boston

Michael Dukakis

1962–70
State representative; opposed Sargent for re-election on ticket with Kevin White

1975–79
Governor of Massachusetts

The 1972 transportation review was the planning exercise that launched a thousand careers. It is impossible to list all the key players here: Many are still influencing policy; some write elsewhere in this magazine. The diagram below is but a sampling of the public-service journeys that began when a gutsy group of pathfinders helped chart a new direction for the region.





Milbert Orlando Brown

1977–90
Director, Boston Urban Gardeners

1980s–90s
Private real estate developer (Four Seasons Hotel)

2007–10
Chairman, House Financial Services Committee

1980–present
Member of Congress

2012
Principal at Millennium Partners, developer of Filene's site, Downtown Crossing

1993–present
Private attorney, mediator, and arbitrator

1991–present
Director, the Boston Indicators Project, The Boston Foundation

2000s
Advisory board, Massachusetts Campaign for Single Payer Healthcare

1990

2000

2010

2000–02
State secretary of administration and finance

1996–2000
Assistant secretary of state, Connecticut

2002–11
Dean, McCormack Graduate School, UMass/Boston

2011–present
Chairman, Massachusetts Gaming Commission

1975–92
Norfolk County district court judge

1971–96
Professor, MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning



Present
Commercial law, public-private highway safety projects

1997–present
Founder and director, South End Technology Training center @Tent City

1980s
Governor of Massachusetts/ presidential nominee

1998–2003
Member, board of directors, Amtrak

1991–present
Distinguished Professor of Political Science, Northeastern University


STREET
BEAT THE BELT
CAMBRIDGE IS A CITY
NOT A HIGHWAY

SMART

An unstoppable highway meets an immovable community. And yields.

BY KARILYN CROCKETT

A group of harried travelers pours out of the train station's heavy aluminum doors. We are all rushing—across the street toward the bus stop, racing home or to work or to errands. This is Roxbury Crossing, bustling at 1:00 PM on a weekday afternoon. A guy is standing outside selling incense, African black soap, and essential oils. Behind him Domino's Pizza is doing a brisk midday business. The woman next to me eyes her watch. A teenager talks into her cell phone. We all know where we are supposed to be and when. But I wonder: Is anyone else thinking about how we really got here and why?



PREVIOUS PAGE

The landscape here tells the story of a halt. Roxbury Crossing is not, after all, the site of a multilane elevated highway connecting suburban motorists to downtown Boston. Instead it is a busy stop along the city's newest rapid-transit line. Where the highway's medusa-like interchange would have roared above Boston's streets, a glossy plaque commemorates what did not happen. It reads:

You are standing in the middle of the Southwest Corridor. It was originally planned as the twelve-lane highway shown in the drawing below. The efforts of thousands of citizens banding together to save their homes, neighborhoods and open spaces created the Orange Line rapid transit, the railroad, and the Southwest Corridor Park you are enjoying today.

The path from protest to policy to a transformed urban infrastructure was never guaranteed.

As the plaque asserts, citizen activism is the theme to this story. The state's plan for an interstate highway system through Boston was stopped not because politicians had a sudden change of heart, but because residents pressured the establishment to abandon outmoded and antidemocratic public policy. Citizens defeated the Southwest Expressway, variously planned as a 12- and then eight-lane highway, and fought to have a 52-acre linear park and mass transit take its place. In the process, local and national transportation policy—fairly dry stuff—was catalyzed into an enduring monument to the efficacy and reach of progressive democratic politics. Yet no one at the time thought this was remotely possible. What appears, in retrospect, an inevitable success story of 1960s activism was anything but.

BELOW

The fight that stopped the highway through Boston began in Cambridge. Sitting in her living room one morning in 1965, Ansti Benfield eyed a newspaper headline announcing that Cambridge had lost the "veto"—a legislative vote enabling the city to reject state highway plans. Benfield had recently purchased a Central Square–area home and now feared displacement from the planned Inner Belt highway. "Well hold it, just a minute! Your adrenaline rolls when you just bought a house and you've got two little kids; you're not about to move again," Benfield recalled for me in a recent interview. "This was just a lit piece of dynamite."

Benfield's anger fueled a door-knocking project to rally neighbors and gather as many anti-highway signatures as possible. Neighbors offered Benfield their signatures but reminded her again and again, "You can't beat city hall!" Within four months, Benfield and her allies collected 1,000 signatures and marched precisely to Cambridge City Hall, where she nailed them to the front door. With this defiant visual splashed across area newspapers, a local movement burst into regional consciousness.

The Cambridge battle soon traveled across the Charles River to find a powerful lever in the activism of Chuck Turner. In 1969, Turner was co-chairman of the Boston Black United Front (BBUF) as well as the Greater Boston Committee on the Transportation Crisis. The moment was ripe. The committee had created a region-spanning umbrella organization for the anti-highway movement and was intent on resetting the state's transportation policy. The BBUF was a black nationalist organization laser-focused on creating a comprehensive development agenda for Boston's black population.

These two organizations advanced cutting-edge political ideas about devolving state power to grassroots communities that were eager to expand local decision making. Black nationalists expressed the idea as "community control," whereas Washington bureaucrats fighting President Johnson's war on poverty preferred the words "maximum feasible participation." Whatever the language, the goal was increased citizen participation and decision-making authority.



Like his Cambridge allies, Turner solicited neighbors through door-knocking campaigns. His efforts were instrumental in securing resident support to tap the gasoline tax for mass transit. On a January afternoon in 2010, I asked Turner about his original assessment of the highway fight. He replied, "You don't win in highway fights… it's one of those situations where it's a long shot at winning. We felt we didn't have any alternative but to fight against it."

Organizers like Benfield and Turner linked the dots between bad policy, untapped citizen outrage, and anti-highway mobilizing. When they and more than 2,000 of their neighbors showed up on the steps of the Massachusetts State House on January 25, 1969, the newly inaugurated governor, Francis Sargent, knew that he was in for a struggle. However, on that day, no one—not Benfield, not Turner, and not Governor Sargent—knew who would succeed. No one knew I-95 and the Inner Belt would be scrapped. No one knew the city of Boston would be given a new public transportation line or a park. The path from protest to policy to a transformed urban infrastructure was long and arduous but not guaranteed.

Although resident-led protests, signature drives, and mass demonstrations pushed Boston's anti-highway movement forward, they did not instantly affect the formal political process. A boisterous throng of allies in the form of advocate planners, political insiders, suburbanites, and proto-environmentalists beefed up the technical analysis and strategizing that ultimately sealed the deal. All this was only aided by Governor Sargent's 1970 call for a comprehensive transportation policy review, with its phalanx of professional planners and technicians paid to develop ideas first birthed by protesters. With that, a citizen movement that began in living rooms and on city streets gained essential political recognition.

Today, democratic citizen input in major development decisions is a given. Some cynics contend that the people's voice has curdled into shrill obstructionism, that local control only impedes progress. But just come to the Roxbury Crossing MBTA stop and see for yourself. Try to imagine an elevated multilane highway traveling right above your head. In this modern transit system that benefits the whole region, in this lovely four-mile linear park, in this revitalized urban community, the value of community intervention is manifest. ■



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On the Wrong Side of a Right-of-Way

by Alan Lupo

Reprinted with permission from *Rites of Way: The Politics of Transportation in Boston and the U.S*
by Alan Lupo, Frank Colcord, and Edmund P. Fowler
Published by Little, Brown, 1971.

Spring, 1970: Lamartine Street in the working-class district of the Jamaica Plain neighborhood in the city of Boston, ground zero of the Federal Interstate Highway System. A scattering of blacks and Puerto Ricans are here, but mostly there are white Catholics who make up the bulk of Boston's population. Ask them where they live, and they'll as likely tell you the parish before the name of the street. And if you're not familiar with the parish, they'll think it strange. You'll call their neighborhood parochial, and some will call it colorful. Whatever you call it, those who plan, design, and construct America's highways call it a right-of-way.

To find out what Lamartine Street was like, you have to look on the odd-numbered side of the street, because that's not part of the right-of-way. It ranges from well-kept two- and three-story houses to somewhat shabby three-deckers to a mix of commercial and residential red brick in the style of Late Industrial Revolution.

Some houses on the even-numbered side also remain. Number 260, for example, is a yellow house with brown trim and a neat garden. Its occupants are an elderly couple. Their home is not needed for the highway. But they have seen and heard the bulldozers and the earthmovers rip up their neighbors' homes and leave a flat dirt wasteland, all the way to Number 226, a vacant space two blocks long and a block from the street to the railroad tracks.

The old man and his wife want to be left alone. They watched the machines at work and then saw vandals rip the plumbing and pipes and all the other vital organs out of the abandoned houses, and, finally, they smelled the stench of arson and heard the almost nightly wail and clanging of fire engines.

From Number 226, a dilapidated house with its door ajar, to Number 216 is more vacant land. Both Number 216 and the house behind it are gutted.

Here, in the yard adjoining Number 216, is one of the last links in the chain reaction set off by the approach of an interstate highway. A man's personal life, from the kind of beans his family ate and milk they drank, to the frame of their television set, is strewn all over the lawn. His wife owned a Maytag washer; they had a red scatter rug; he wore size 10 French Shriner black shoes; and he read *Field & Stream* and *American Rifleman*.

In back, in the large field that was once a neighborhood, you find other artifacts. A grisly torso of a plastic monkey in a soldier's suit; a mangled tricycle with one wheel missing; the heart of a record, with jagged edges ("Unbreakable," the label insists) that once featured Blue Barron and His Orchestra in "Cruising Down the River" with Vocal Ensemble; and two-thirds of another record, this one a collection of Christmas carols by Bing Crosby. Bing Crosby and Blue Barron and the *American Rifleman*. It may not be your lifestyle, but it was somebody's. It was from the civilization known as White Urban Ethnic American, a local colony of which was being plowed under for Interstate 95.

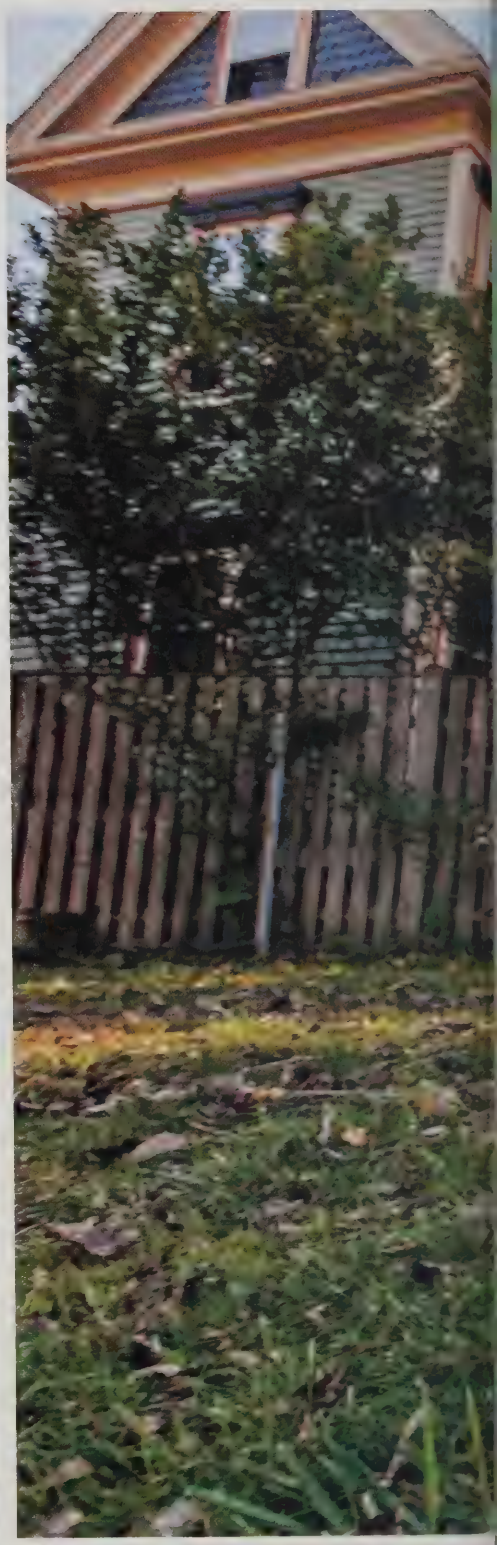
Do you know that if I-95 is ever completed, it will take you from Houlton, Maine, to South Miami, Florida, a distance of 1,866 miles, without one traffic light? Not one traffic light.

What Was Saved

Photographs by Peter Vanderwarker

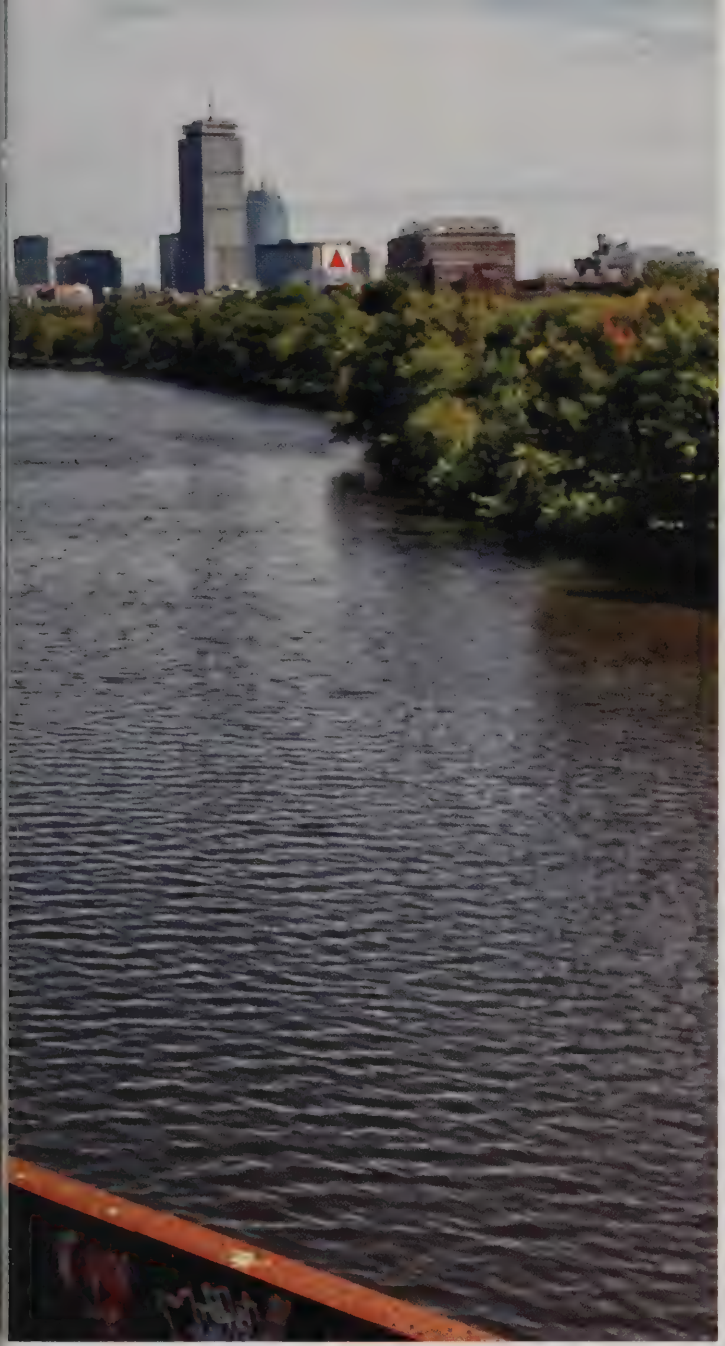
The decision to halt interstate highway expansion through greater Boston was a statement—rare for the times—that cities are places worth saving. These photographs show the breathing life that was allowed to grow, even in the razed spaces, once the highway threat was removed. The homes and neighborhoods saved from the wrecking ball, the woods and meadows saved from the bulldozer, remind us of another important truth: that given time and protection from environmental insult, the world will repair itself.















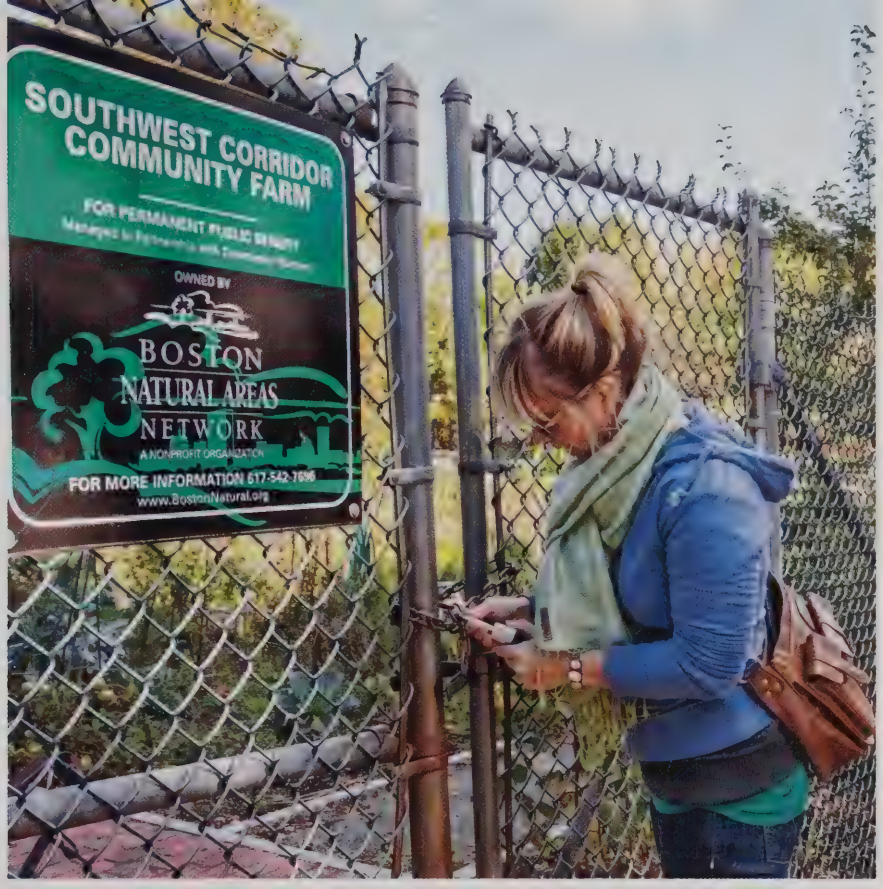
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PROMISES TO KEEP

WHEN IT COMES TO VISIONARY PLANNING, MASSACHUSETTS STILL HAS MILES TO GO

BY STEPHANIE POLLACK



"The Boston region is at a crossroads in transportation policy. Dissatisfaction with the existing transportation decision process, and with its products, is rife. And there is a widespread willingness to consider fundamental changes, [which] has been shaped by two major crises: on the one hand, the fiscal crisis of public transportation; on the other, growing resistance to the deleterious by-products of private transportation." —THE GOVERNOR'S TASK FORCE ON TRANSPORTATION, JUNE 1970.

These words are now four decades old, but the sentiments are identical to those being voiced today as the Commonwealth struggles to decide whether and how to pay for billions of dollars in transportation investments needed to ensure the state's economic prosperity, quality of life, and environmental sustainability. In 1970, the Governor's Task Force on Transportation saw these twin crises as creating an opportunity for transformational change. Task Force members boldly and optimistically predicted that "the current transportation crises will be viewed in future years as having laid the groundwork for an era of great and genuine transportation progress."

And they were right. The "balanced transportation" program established by the Boston Transportation Planning Review (BTPR) provided a blueprint for decades of progressive transportation policy and investment in Massachusetts—across Democratic and Republican administrations, in boom times and busts. The sticking power of the BTPR—both its big ideas and many of its specific project recommendations—is especially striking in an era when the body politic seems to suffer from collective attention deficit disorder.

Still, this vision was never fully implemented, and its legacy has not yet been realized. With Governor Deval Patrick and the legislature committed to tackling comprehensive transportation finance reform in 2013, now is a perfect time to reflect on the lessons from the past when the attention of the Commonwealth's residents and leaders was focused on transforming transportation planning and policy—and to remind ourselves of the work that remains.

Forty years on, the time has come for the Commonwealth to fulfill three of the most important unkept promises: institutionalizing open and visionary planning, healing the scars still left in neighborhoods cleared for the cancelled highway projects, and completing and funding the state's public transportation system.

Reinventing Planning

In his February 1970 speech announcing the decision to impose a moratorium on new highway construction, Governor Francis Sargent promised that "for the first time, a metropolitan transportation plan will be developed that is free of outdated ideas and obsolete myths." The BTPR delivered on that promise, relying on a creative new approach dubbed "open planning," designed to collect perspectives from a broad range of what we would now call stakeholders and generate and evaluate a broad range of alternatives.

It was a radical redefinition of city planning, one that recognized that local neighbors often have the best understanding of the issues in their own communities. This new planning process encouraged participants to put their own ideas on the table and provided the technical resources to seriously evaluate a broad range of nontraditional alternatives, many of which proved worthier than the ideas that had long populated highway and transit plans for Greater Boston.

Sadly, such open planning was not institutionalized in Massachusetts nor replicated elsewhere. Some elements, such as broad stakeholder involvement, have become commonplace. But transportation planning in Massachusetts today is too often an exercise in deciding how best to allocate the pittance available for new projects. Indeed, investing in open-ended "blue sky" regional transportation planning is seen as a wasteful luxury. The BTPR should have taught us that the financial resources to implement ambitious transportation plans ultimately emerge from inclusive, visionary planning that helps to build the political will to make transformative transportation investments.

Healing the Scars

Arguably the most important focus of the Boston Transportation Planning Review was not "planning" or even "transportation" but "Boston." The highway plan that was roundly rejected was an outgrowth of the notion, embodied by the *Futurama* exhibit at the 1939 World's Fair, that cities were obsolete and would soon be dominated by huge freeways. Indeed, renderings of the Southwest Expressway/Inner Belt interchange planned for Jamaica Plain look startlingly like some of the *Futurama* infrastructure. The decision to stop the highway and focus on transit investment was as much a vote of confidence in the future of urbanism and of Boston—and Brookline and Cambridge and Somerville—as it was a transportation decision. If the

OPPOSITE
The elevated Orange Line in Charlestown, 1971. Photo: Nick DeWolf.

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highway plan had been implemented, today's thriving urban core would not exist.

Unfortunately, however, the decision to stop the highway came too late for some neighborhoods. More than 90 percent of the Southwest Corridor in Roxbury and Jamaica Plain, where Interstate 695 would have connected to the Inner Belt, was cleared before the highway was halted, leaving more than 150 acres of vacant land between Forest Hills and Madison Park. Although some of that land was redeveloped for the Orange Line and Southwest Corridor Park, too many parcels remain vacant four decades later, despite repeated attempts to secure viable development.

> The decision to stop the highway came too late for some neighborhoods.

Boston's Melnea Cass Boulevard, constructed as part of the Southwest Corridor development plan, is currently undergoing a comprehensive rethinking, since its current incarnation involves far too much street and anchors far too little economic development.

At the other end of the canceled highway system, in Somerville, the underused Inner Belt Industrial Park harks back to the highway that was never built; the city of Somerville's recent SomerVision plan designates the area as a transformational zone where the hoped-for extension of the Green Line could at last spur redevelopment. The work of the BTPR will not truly be finished until the neighborhoods "saved" by the highway cancellation are restored and thriving once again.

Revitalizing the Transit System

More than just a rejection of highways, the BTPR represented an embrace of transit as the key to mobility and prosperity for metropolitan Boston, at a time when many saw buses and subways as an irrelevant relic of an earlier era. Sargent understood that the Boston area's extensive rapid-transit and commuter-rail network was "in large part responsible for the economic and cultural vitality of the metropolis." He rejected the highway plan in part because it would "destroy the financial viability of the transit system" and cause "great harm to those groups in the population that are most dependent on transit for their mobility—the elderly, the low income, the handicapped, and the young."

The BTPR generated a host of new ideas for

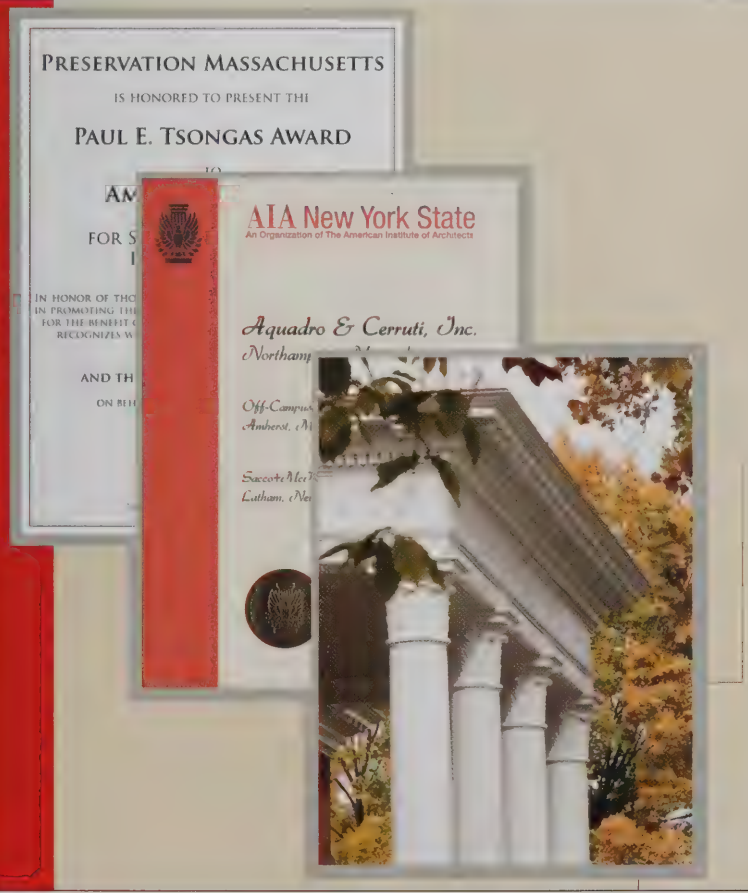


transit projects that were enthusiastically embraced by Sargent and later Governor Michael Dukakis: relocating the Orange Line into the Southwest Corridor, extending the Red Line to Alewife, and investing heavily in the ailing commuter-rail system. Other proposed projects—replacement transit service for the Washington Street corridor previously served by the elevated Orange Line, and extension of the Green Line to Somerville—remain works in progress. And others—extension of the Blue Line to Lynn and creation of a "circumferential" transit line later dubbed the Urban Ring—have fallen by the wayside. Today, Greater Boston still lacks critical pieces of the "vital transit system" envisioned by the planning review.

Even more disappointing than the stalled projects is the failure to act on the BTPR's admonition that the regional transit system had been "permitted to deteriorate—physically, financially, and institutionally." The report pointed to the need to modernize stations, replace rolling stock, and build new maintenance facilities, all still needing attention today. Despite "forward funding" legislation enacted in 2000 that allocated a portion of the state sales tax to the MBTA, Secretary Alan Altshuler's 1973 characterization of the state's system for financing transit remains valid: We have a "self-defeating tax structure for the support of transit in the Boston region, combined with total inattention to the problem of transit survival in the Commonwealth's other urban regions." Both the MBTA and the regional-transit authorities born out of the BTPR need hundreds of millions of additional dollars annually for expanded operation, maintaining aging systems, and expanding to meet the transportation needs of the 21st century.

Public transportation remains central to regional plans for economic prosperity, thriving urban neighborhoods, and sustainable transportation choices. Yet we have continued to allow our public transportation systems "to deteriorate—physically, financially, and institutionally." The real legacy of this 40-year-old struggle will be secure only when a sustainable financing system is in place for the MBTA and for regional-transit systems across Massachusetts.

Today the Commonwealth again has difficult choices to make about the future of its transportation systems. The region is well overdue for a 21st-century version of the Boston Transportation Planning Review—one that engages residents, stimulates our collective imagination, and generates both exciting new ideas and the political will to invest in them over the next four decades. ■



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FIRST, WE NEED A PLAN

BY DAVID DIXON FAIA

In 2012, Greater Boston needs to stop resting on the laurels of the past and start investing in the future. The enduring message of the Boston Transportation Planning Review is the imperative to create a comparable visionary agenda for our time. With the same kind of bold leadership, engaged citizenry, and creative thinking that marked the effort 40 years ago, the Commonwealth can once again lay the groundwork for an era of genuine progress.

Should we doubt our foresight and political courage, look at what we accomplished 40 years ago. Consider how far the anti-highway forces moved public dialogue. The people they had to convince—professionals, government officials—saw cities and transportation very differently than we do today. Architects and planners dismissed Jane Jacobs' *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* as drolly quaint. They praised Robert Venturi for an exhibit he designed that toured major American museums proclaiming the television-centric family room the new public square, and the backyard the public park of the future.

The elected officials who backed the activists' assertion that the costs of building the planned highways outweighed the benefits stood nearly alone in a world that believed that highways represented the economic salvation of declining cities like Boston—then an economic basket case with a median household income barely 60 percent of the national median. "Cities of the future" like Houston, Dallas, and Atlanta were paving their way to prosperity.

Yet the activists' vision turned out to be right. Their new transportation agenda set us up well for the rise of an innovation economy and the rediscovery of urban living. Today, Boston's per capita GDP is roughly 25 percent greater than the average of those "cities of the future," and only the Washington, DC, region has a lower unemployment rate. Today, architects and planners cite Jane Jacobs to describe best practices.

As in 1972, neighborhood activism can still move us today. Grassroots campaigns to replace Jamaica Plain's Casey Overpass and Somerville's McCarthy Overpass (on the McGrath-O'Brien Highway) with landscaped urban boulevards have won broad support. Boston mayor Tom Menino endorsed the Casey's replacement as "Boston's next Big Dig"; Somerville mayor Joseph Curtatone has relentlessly promoted the social, economic, and environmental benefits of bringing the McGrath Highway down to grade. The state Department of Transportation has committed to dismantling the Casey now, and the McGrath when funding permits. It also began studying replacement of the Bowker Overpass between the Back Bay and Kenmore Square. Skeptics have raised concerns about slowing through-traffic, but we understand today that an urban neighborhood's quality of life outweighs moving cars more quickly through the city.

Still, we can no longer rely solely on neighborhood activists. After all, 1972 was pre-Internet, pre-iPhone, and pre–Barbara Lynch. Today, we face less visible but potentially more consequential challenges.

We can already foresee dramatic changes over the next 40 years that

PREVIOUS PAGE
Photo: Kevin Day.

by themselves compel new ways of thinking. Sea levels may rise by three feet in that time, requiring at the very least a comprehensive retrofit of the MBTA. The majority of population growth will be among people 65 and older, greatly expanding dependency on transit. Rising energy costs and environmental barriers will force growth toward the core after six decades of sprawl. Roughly half the buildings we will inhabit have not yet been built, offering an extraordinary opportunity to reshape our region.

Dramatic changes over the next 40 years compel new ways of thinking.

As it stands, regional development patterns have already made life in Greater Boston too expensive. We worry about the high cost of housing, but the cost of transportation promises to become a greater burden. Households in car-dependent suburbs already spend close to one-third of disposable income on transportation, fast approaching what they spend on housing and roughly three times what comparable urban households with access to transit spend. As more than a billion residents of developing countries enter the middle class and bid up the cost of fossil fuels, that gap will only widen.

We take pride in our innovation-driven knowledge economy, but our failure to invest in transit threatens our competitive edge. America faces a shortage of educated workers, projected to last at least 20 years. Economic engines like Kendall Square and the Longwood area grew up around major research universities because they pump out skilled workers. Knowledge industries are mobile and will follow their educated, creative workforce to survive. Groups like CEOs for Cities have shown that today those workers decide where to live based on lifestyle, and the places they choose are overwhelmingly walkable, urban, and served by public transit.

We profess to believe in social equity, but changing demographics are forcing lower-income households—for whom operating a car is prohibitively expensive—from cities to auto-dependent suburbs, a move that restricts their access to jobs, healthcare, and education. In 1972, white married couples with children constituted the majority of Boston-region households; in 2012, roughly two-thirds of all households comprise singles and childless couples, and the region is far more diverse. This shift is powering the growing desirability of transit-



served urban neighborhoods, driving up their cost.

Today's BTPR must call for a radical shift away from existing patterns toward the creation of an integrated and energy-efficient pedestrian, bike, bus, and rail transportation network. We need to provide people of every income affordable access to job centers like Kendall Square (underserved by transit) and the Longwood Medical Area (even worse).

Our economy cannot afford a system that requires solitary 90-minute automobile commutes—each way. We need a strategy that ensures that people of any age or income can choose to live in any neighborhood from Boston's waterfront to I-495—a broad spectrum of walkable, amenity-rich choices for living, working, and learning.

Facing the same problems, cities like New York City, Denver, Seattle, and Los Angeles (Los Angeles!) have begun work on comprehensive initiatives to improve mobility by expanding transit. Washington, DC, will build 37 miles of new streetcar lines that connect to its Metro system. Over two decades, this plan increases the share of Washington households within a five-minute walk of premium transit from one-sixth to one-half.

How do we make this happen at a time when deficits and conventional wisdom say that vanishing federal funding—which underwrote the transportation agendas of four decades ago—dictates lowered expectations? The experience of regions building ambitious streetcar systems suggests looking to local-value capture to replace scarce federal dollars. Washington's streetcar plan relies in part on the new real-estate development spurred by its construction. The city's K Street Business Improvement District will chip in $50 million because office rents, already high, will rise further with better transit access.

New households attracted to transit-served neighborhoods will boost local Main Streets and sales tax revenues. Tens of thousands of existing households will be able to go "car light"—reducing car ownership because they can count on transit—and saving roughly $5,000 per year as a result. All these changes generate income streams that the District will tap to pay most or all of the system's costs.

The Boston Transportation Planning Review prepared our region well for the closing decades of the 20th century. We have the ability to reset a course that will carry us into the 21st. We can all share the benefits of building our region's future—*if* a far broader coalition of elected, institutional, business, professional, and community leaders step up. Let's get started. ■





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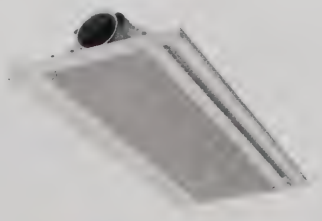


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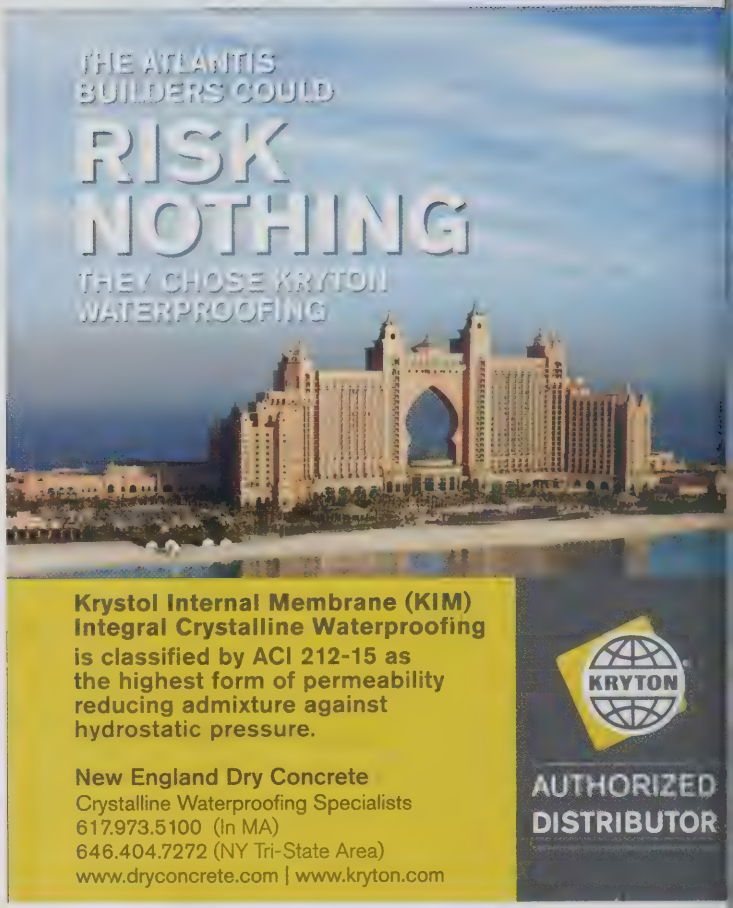
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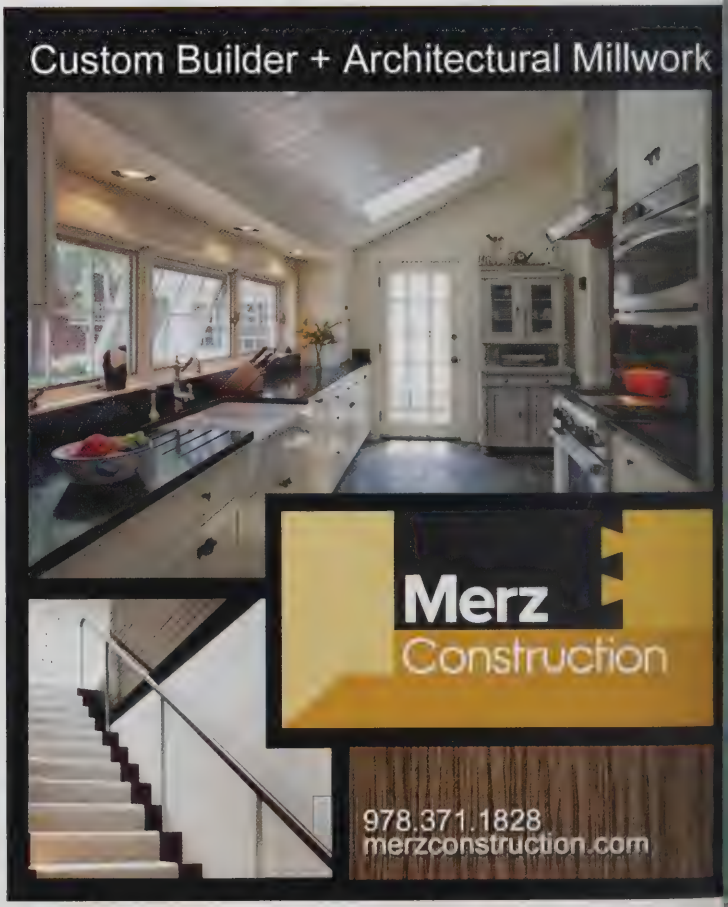
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Boston Transportation Planning Review
archive.org/details/circumferentialt00mass
So the Inner Belt highway was rejected. Then what? This 1972 document proposes a "Transit Circumferential"—a mass-transit loop that would link underserved areas and move folks more efficiently around Boston Now dubbed the "Urban Ring," we still need it. Read why here.

Infrastructure 2012: Spotlight on Leadership
www.uli.org/annual-publications/infrastructure-report-2012
A recent report from the Urban Land Institute offers helpful examples of what other regions are doing to repair infrastructure and how they finance it. Case studies, emerging trends, and photos of design solutions provide a wealth of important information.

Equal or Better
www.imdb.com/video/wab/vi633184537
Just watch the first two minutes! The whole film is equally compelling, but even the opening scenes will influence your view about the Silver Line, the Orange Line, and connections between civil rights and public transit, and not only in Boston. There's a great man vs. bus race, too.

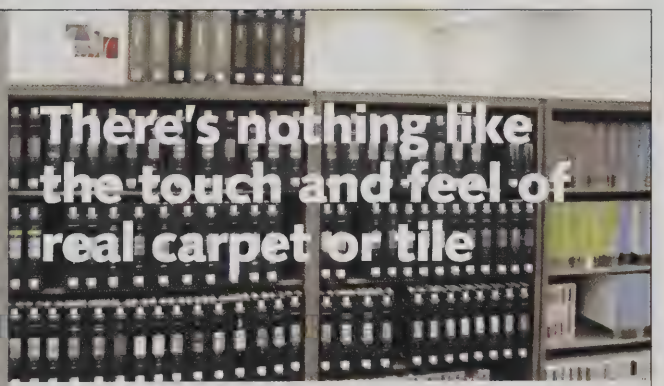
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Character Study

William Sargent is a consultant for the *NOVA scienceNow* television series and the author of 18 books about science and the environment, including, most recently, *Beach Wars: 10,000 Years on a Barrier Beach*. He lives in Ipswich, Massachusetts.

ABOVE
Governor Francis W. Sargent speaks to Inner Belt opponents in 1969. AP Images.

Most histories of the highway fights of the 1970s stress how unusual it was for a Republican governor to go from supporting roads to supporting public transportation. I don't want to take anything away from the drama of that moment, but I know a little secret. Well, actually, two.

First, my father was never that much of a Republican, certainly not by today's dreary standards. Second, his heart was never really into supporting the highways. Sure, he was head of the pro-highway state Department of Public Works (DPW) in the 1960s. But he had spent most of his career working on environmental issues, first as director of the state's Division of Marine Fisheries, then as head of the Department of Natural Resources.

In fact, my father had a lot in common with the highway opponents. He had started as an activist himself, writing so many letters to then-governor Christian Herter about overfishing that the governor finally told him to go run the division himself. So he understood that activists often know a lot more about particular issues and are often far more passionate about them than those within the governmental apparatus.

And the times, they were a-changin'. All kinds of people were jumping into the fray. At a famous meeting in the Wursthaus in Harvard Square, Daniel Patrick Moynihan was opining that it wouldn't really be so bad for the good citizens of Cambridge if the Inner Belt highway forced them out to the leafy suburbs. John Kenneth Galbraith draped his lanky arm over Moynihan's shoulder and told him, "Only a moral imbecile would articulate such a point of view."

I was in college in 1970 and much more immersed in studying monkeys and plankton than thinking about highways, but some of my friends convinced me to join them at a demonstration in front of the State House. My father always said it was seeing me carrying a placard in the front row that made him decide he could no longer support the Inner Belt. He made a dramatic TV appearance soon after, saying he had made a mistake supporting the proposed highways and from that moment on was going to change the state's transportation policy.

But it was more complicated than that. My father was about the least ideological person I have ever known. He made a point of surrounding himself with people from every political stripe whose primary interest was in solving problems, not winning debates. He was always willing to try a new approach and didn't really care whose side it came from.

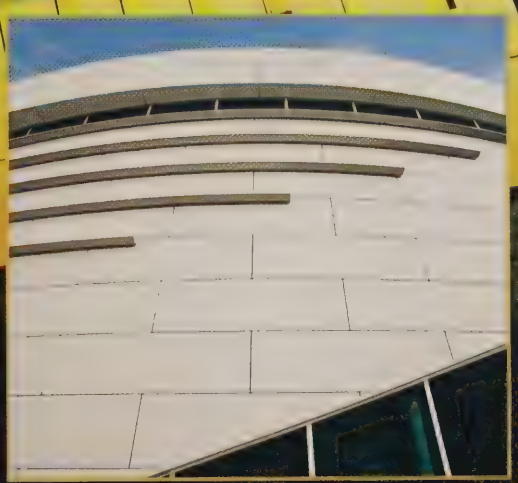
As my father had risen through the ranks of government, he had collected an inner circle of similarly open-minded advisers from every sphere. They included people from his days in the Department of Natural Resources as well as those from the DPW. By early 1970s, they had grown disillusioned with both the thinking and the politics behind the Inner Belt. Some of them suggested he just drop the Inner Belt and go on his way. But I think his real leadership came in offering a new vision for how transportation could work in Massachusetts and then persuading both the public and policymakers at home and in Washington, DC, to make it happen.

So my father announced a moratorium on the Inner Belt and then ordered a study that outright rejected all the highways planned within Route 128 and proposed expanding the MBTA's Red, Orange, and Green lines of the MBTA in 1973. That was the beginning of the state's changing its focus away from building more highways to supporting the funding and construction of public transportation. It eventually led to Boston's Big Dig and our ever-graceful Zakim Bridge.

Afterwards, my father hired many of the activists, including my friends who had opposed him on the Inner Belt. Henry Lee became his Secretary of Energy, and Andy Klein worked with Al Kramer as trusted members of my father's inner circle. That is the way that government can work in a thriving, ever-changing democracy. ■

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